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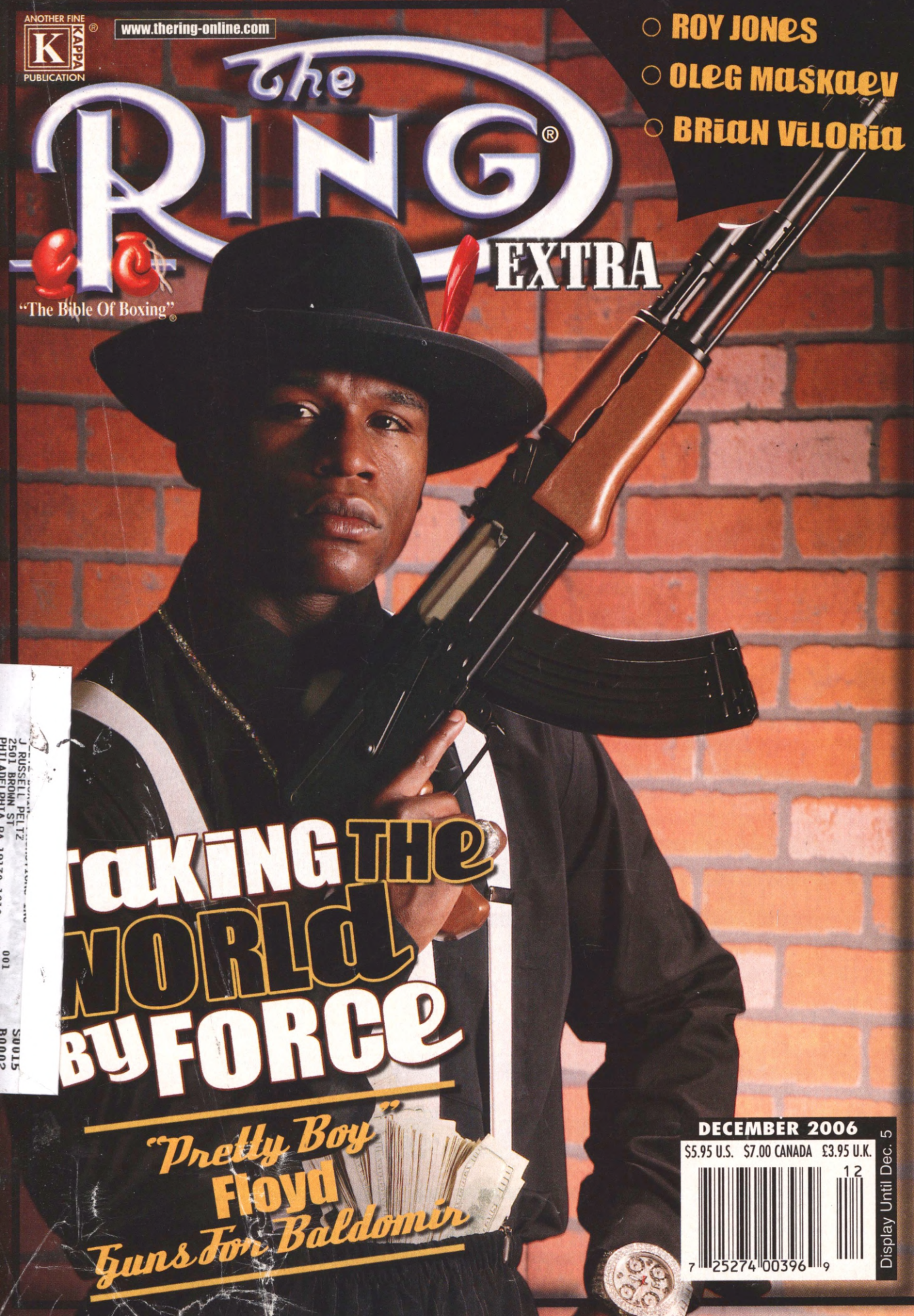

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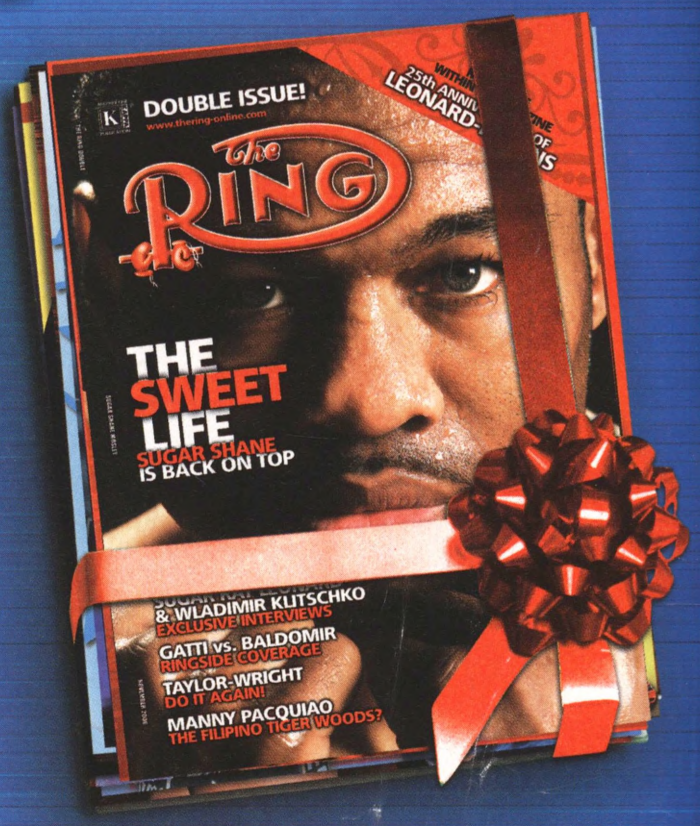

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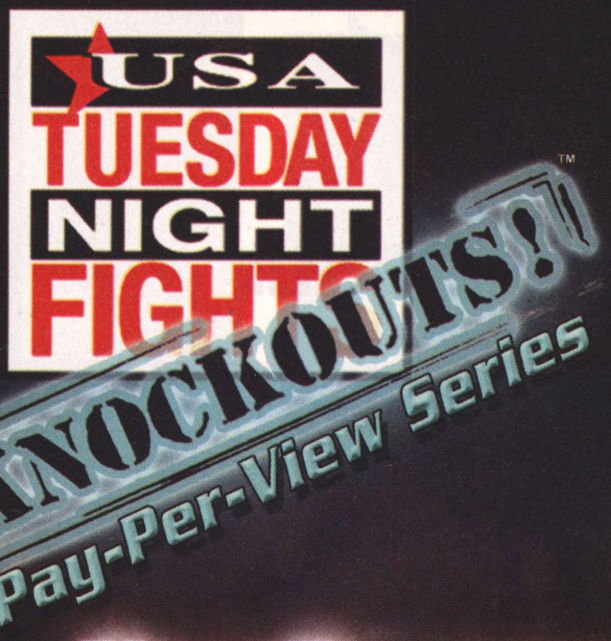

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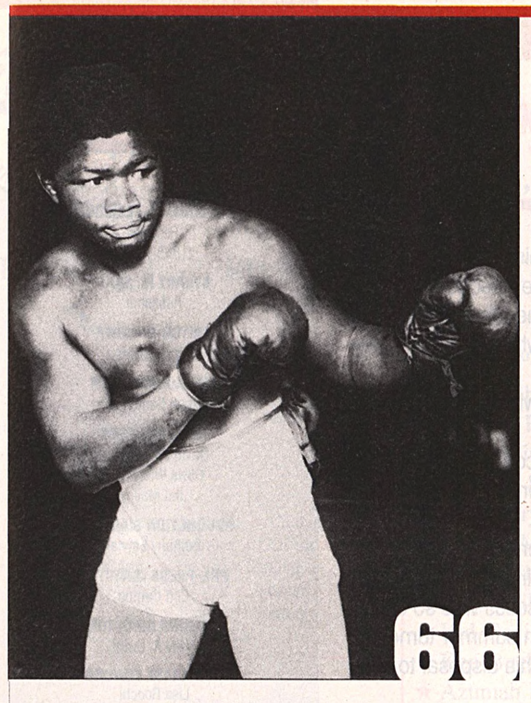

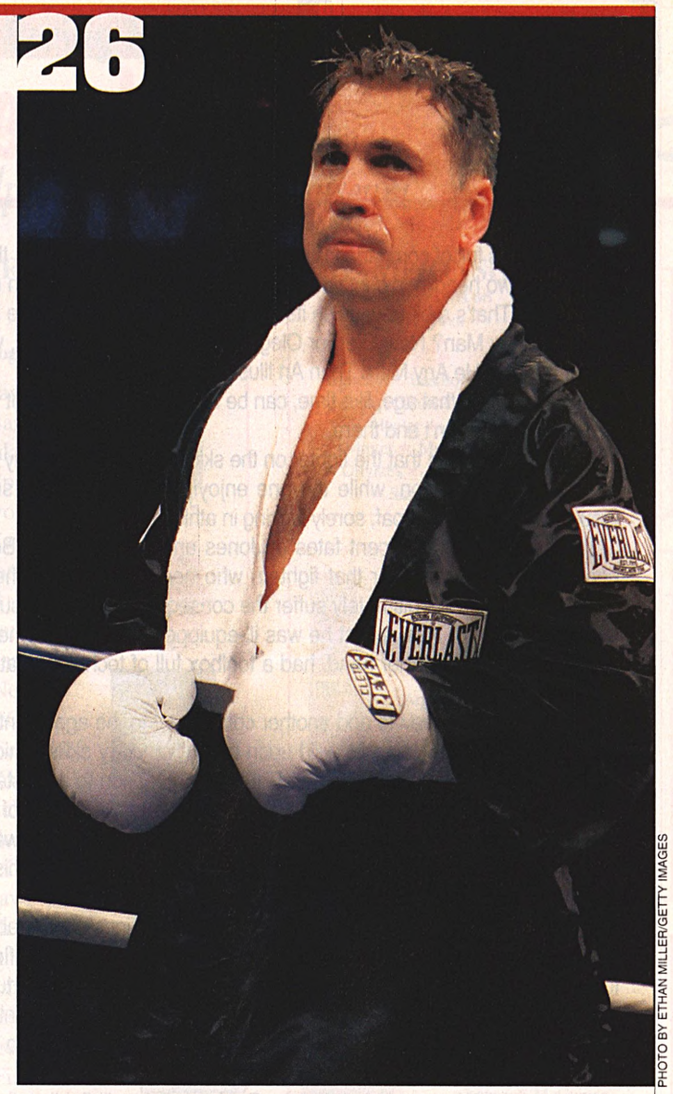

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The RING

Boxing is full of comparisons and contradictions. For example, this issue of THE RING has two headlines containing the number 37. Moreover, both referred to a fighter's age. That's a bit unusual in itself, but what's ironic is that one headline ("Who Was That Maskaev Man? New Life For Oleg At 37") has a positive spin, while the other ("Roy Jones At 37: Is He Any More Than An Illusion?") is negative.

It goes to show that age, like time, can be an open-ended concept where boxing is concerned. And it doesn't end there.

It's also fascinating that the fighter on the skids at age 37 is widely considered the most gifted of his generation, while the one enjoying a lucrative late surge has long been thought of as a bit of an oaf, sorely lacking in athletic grace.

The contrast in the recent fates of Jones and contemporary Bernard Hopkins has been a welcome reminder that fighters who neglect to master their trade—no matter how naturally gifted—ultimately suffer the consequences. Jones' success was so closely linked to Mother Nature that he was ill-equipped to do battle when summer turned to fall. Hopkins, on the other hand, had a toolbox full of techniques at his disposal to hold Father Time at bay.

Now comes Maskaev to add another component to the age-talent-technique equation. True, he's finally beginning to build upon his rudimentary skills, which certainly played a role in his defeat of Hasim Rahman. But any comparison to a master craftsman such as Hopkins is just as ridiculous as likening Oleg's natural ability to that of Jones.

No, the biggest factor in Maskaev's upset victory over Rahman was mental strength—which brings us to welterweight champion Carlos Baldomir and his upcoming defense against Floyd Mayweather.

Mayweather is one of those rare fighters who combines an overabundance of physical gifts with peerless craftsmanship. While unworldly speed and reflexes have been the foundation of his unbeaten career, Mayweather has also learned virtually every nuance of the sport. The one aspect of his game we're not sure about is mental toughness. That's because he's never been pushed to the point where he needed to call upon the sort of inner resolve that surfaces only at times of great peril.

I have a sneaking suspicion that the Baldomir fight will finally tell us once and for all if Mayweather is really as great as a lot of people, including me, thinks he is. One thing he won't have to worry about, however, is Baldomir's age. Carlos doesn't turn 37 until April 30, 2008.

***

Longtime readers will probably have noticed that this issue's cover has a definite déjà vu look to it. Yes, it's very similar to the famous December 1980 Thomas Hearns cover, featuring the Detroit "Hit Man" wearing a pinstripe suit and fedora, toting an M-16 semiautomatic rifle.

Hearns had ambiguous feelings about his nickname because of the unsavory connotations. Mayweather, on the other hand, has always reveled in his "Pretty Boy Floyd" persona and was eager to appear on the cover wearing gangsta gear, armed with what I believe is an AK-47. So we put him together with Getty Images' top photographer, Al Bello, and the result proves that some cool concepts never go out of style.

***

British promoter Frank Warren requested that we correct a bit of misinformation in the headline of a feature about him in the August 2006 issue of THE RING EXTRA. While Warren has had his financial ups and downs, he has never been "bankrupt."

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Marion, OH 43306-8129
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The Ring (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 85, No11 (Extra, December 2006), is published monthly by London Publishing Co., 6198 Butler Pike, Suite 200, Blue Bell, PA 19422. Periodicals postage paid at Blue Bell, PA 19422, and additional post offices. Postmaster: Send change of address notices to: The Ring, P.O. Box 2029, Dept. 9, Marion, OH 43306-8129. Single copy price $5.95 ($7.00 in Canada, £3.95 in U.K.). Subscription price $83.40 in the U.S., $99.00 in Canada and remaining countries. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2006 London Publishing Co. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy or content of any advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES AND RATES: (215) 643-6385. U.S. and Canadian distribution by Kable Distribution Services Inc., 641 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10022. International distribution by Worldwide Media Service Inc., 115 East 23rd St., New York, NY 10010, U.K. distribution by Comag, Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB77QE, England.
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★ Buddy McGirt
★ Michael Carbajal
★ Barry McGuigan
★ "Irish" Micky Ward
★ Carlos Palomino
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★ Angelo Dundee
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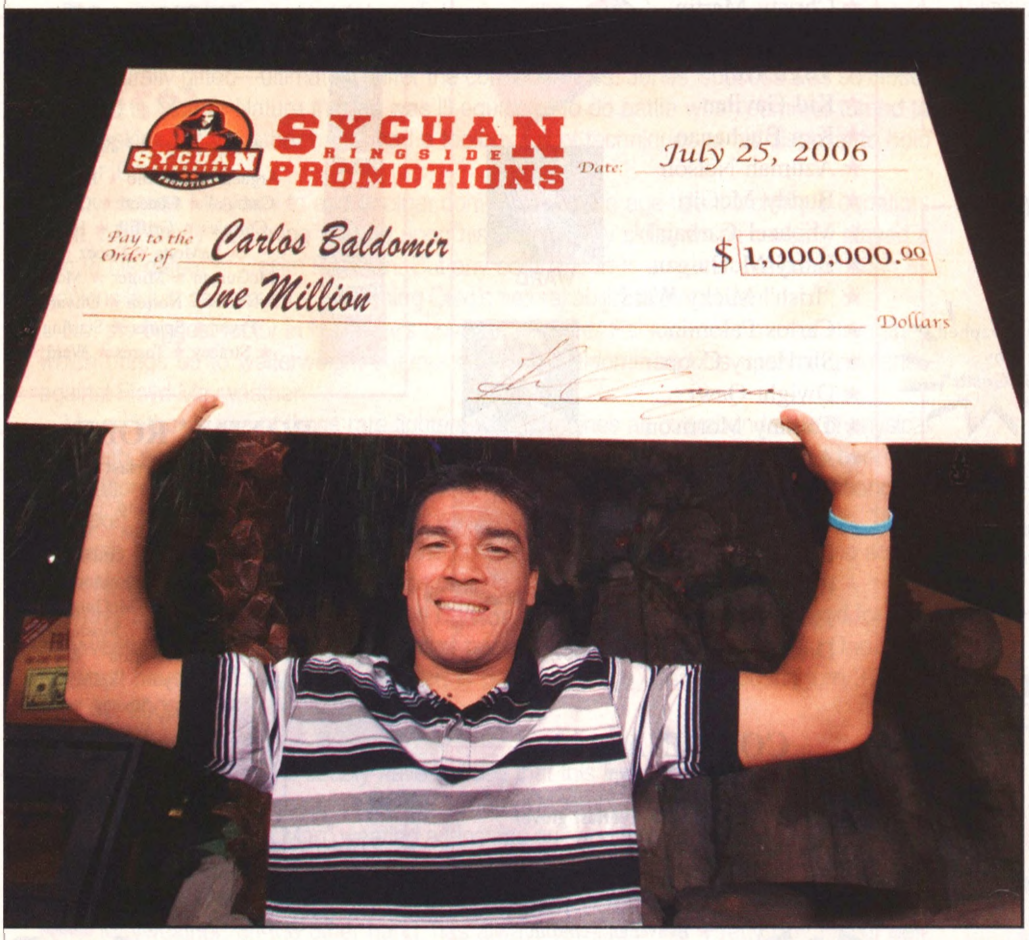
Baldomir's Whirlwind Celebration

Carlos Baldomir's victory lap after knocking out Arturo Gatti on July 22 didn't end until August 1. The welterweight champion started his celebration inside the ring at Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall and eventually finished up back in his hometown of Santa Fe, Argentina. Along the way there was a stopover at the Sycuan Resort and Casino in El Cajon, California, where he was presented with a gigantic check for $1-million by his promoter, Sycuan Ringside Promotions, representing the biggest payday of the fighter's 13-year career.



To the victor goes the spoils

When Baldomir's plane touched down at Ezeiza International Airport in Buenos Aires at 9:30 a.m., he was greeted by the media and held a press conference before moving on to Santa Fe, where he arrived with his wife, Graciela, and their four sons, Florenicia, Carlos Maximiliano, Jose, and Lourdes that afternoon. The champ traveled from Suace Viejo Airport to downtown in the basket of a cherry picker, escorted by motorcycle police, as flag-waving fans looked on.

The first stop was the Colon Soccer Club from which he received a gift of three VIP seats and spoke to a gathering of about 500. Next, his motorcade toured Santa Fe City, eventually arriving at the Carlos Monzon monument near the Parana River.

Like Baldomir, the late middleweight champion was from Santa Fe, and is still held in high regard by the community. Near the monument is the *Quincho de Chiquito*, a cabin full of Monzon memorabilia. Also like Monzon, Baldomir is trained by Amilca Brusa, who was on hand for the homecoming, along with co-trainer Jose Lemos, who used to be one of Monzon's sparring partners.

The musical group Cali was on hand to serenade the champ with "Una Estrella te Iluminara" ("A Star Will Enlighten You"), the same song Baldomir used as his entrance music for the Gatti fight.

At the end of the long day, Baldomir spoke to the hundreds of fans gathered outside of the restaurant where he was enjoying yet another victory banquet.

"I have been on my feet for more than 25 hours," a weary Baldomir told them. "But you make me forget everything. Thanks to all of you."

Baldomir also spoke of his accomplishment and his future: "I am the real champion because when I defeated Zab Judah he was the only champion. Yes, I am the real champion and I will defeat Floyd Mayweather too. And in that case, a bout with Oscar De La Hoya could be possible."

Hard to believe? You bet. But so has everything that's happened to Baldomir this year. Monzon would be proud.

—Carlos Irusta

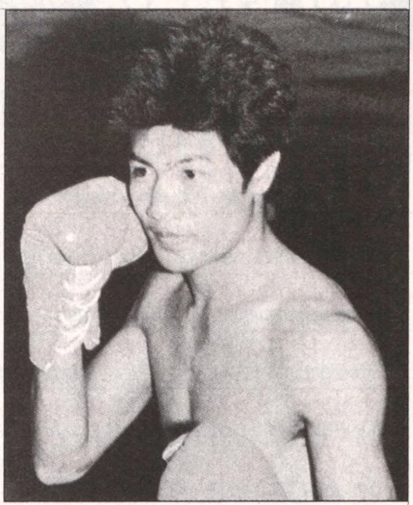
Payao Poontarat, 1956-2006

Payao Poontarat, the first athlete from Thailand to win an Olympic medal in any sport, died of Lou Gehrig's Disease on August 13 in Bangkok.

A former Mauy Thai boxer, he switched to traditional boxing in 1975 and won a bronze medal at the '76 Montreal Games. Poontarat turned pro in '81 and won the WBC super flyweight title on November 27, 1983, in Pattaya, Thailand, with a split decision over Rafael Orono.

Poontarat made one successful defense, stopping Japan's Guty Espadas in 10 rounds, but lost the belt in his next bout when Jiro Watanabe edged him via split decision. He got another crack at Watanabe later that year, only to be stopped in the 11th round. Following a decision loss the following years, Poontarat retired with a 10-4 (7) record.

After his boxing career, Poontarat joined the Royal Thai Police Department, where he achieved the rank of captain. Following his 10-year stint with the police, he was elected as a member of parliament for his home province of Pachuabkirihan in 2001. Sadly, about a year later he developed the disease that eventually killed him.



Poontarat was the first Thai to win an Olympic medal

Al Hostak, 1916-2006

Until he knocked out Freddie Steele on July 26, 1938, to capture the National Boxing Association's version of the middleweight title, Al Hostak had been considered little more than a local ticker seller. In fact, when he climbed into the ring at Seattle's Civic Stadium to face the heavily favored Steele, Hostak had never had a pro bout outside of his home state of Washington.

Hostak as he looked in his prime

Hostak was only 22 when he tore out of his corner in front of 35,000 rabid supporters and floored Steele four times before referee Jack Dempsey, the former heavyweight champion, counted out Steele at the 1:43 mark of the opening round.

"Everybody was saying after the fight that I caught him with a lucky punch," said Hostak. "It was no lucky punch. I studied Steele's moves for months before I ever got in the ring with him." Dempsey told the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* that Hostak was "the fastest puncher I've ever seen."

Hostak, who was born in Minneapolis to Czech immigrants, moved to Seattle as a toddler and took up boxing when high school classmates teased him about his stuttering. He turned pro in May 1932 and soon developed a devastating left hook—despite suffering from brittle hands—and a passionate fan following in Washington State.

Hostak lost the NBA belt to Solly Krieger via majority decision in November 1938, but regained it the following June when he knocked out Krieger in the fourth round. Following a successful defense against Eric Seelig, Hostak lost the title to Tony Zale via second-round knockout in May 1940.

Although he never got another crack at a title, Hostak continued to campaign on and off until 1949, when he retired with an overall record of 65-9-11 (43). By then, "Savage Slav" had pounded out a reputation as one of the hardest-hitting middleweights of all-time and ended up number 59 on THE RING's 2002 list of the greatest punchers in boxing history.

After hanging up his gloves, Hostak worked as a King County sheriff's deputy and a security guard at Longacres racetrack. He died August 13 at Evergreen Hospice in Kirkland, Washington, of complications from a stroke suffered two weeks prior to his death.

TV Fights of the Month

Date	Winner/Loser	Network	Division	Significance	Matchup	Result
7/21/06	Allan Greene KO 5 Anthony Bonsante	ESPN2	sm	B-	C	C-
This remind anyone else of Roy Jones-Vinny Pazienza?						
7/22/06	**Carlos Baldomir KO 9 Arturo Gatti**	**HBO**	**w**	**A**	**B+**	**B**
Baldomir better here in every way; he's no easy mark for Mayweather						
7/27/06	Kelly Pavlik KO 6 Bronco McKart	OLN	m	C+	B-	C
Not a bad main event for OLN's first telecast; we'll keep watching						
7/28/06	Ray Austin D 12 Sultan Ibragimov	ESPN2	h	C+	B+	B-
Good old-fashioned heavyweight slugfest, even if neither guy is anything special						
7/29/06	Joshua Clottey W 12 Richard Gutierrez	HBO	w	C	A-	C+
Excellent matchup comes down to Clottey just being a little better at everything						
7/29/06	Vivian Harris KO 7 Stevie Johnston	HBO	jw	B	C+	C
If you're a fan of Johnston, this was hard to watch; the kind of win Harris needed, though						
7/29/06	Roy Jones W 12 Prince Badi Ajamu	PPV	lh	B-	C	C
Roy, your fighting gamecocks called; they said don't come home						
8/2/06	Rogers Mtagwa KO 4 Alvin Brown	ESPN2	f	C	C	C
Doesn't Ed Darian sound awful close to exactly the way he did 20 years ago?						
8/4/06	Anthony Peterson KO 2 Jose Soto	ESPN2	l	C+	D-	C-
It's hard to imagine a fighter being more in control of things than Peterson was here						
8/4/06	LaFarrell Bunting KO 5 Jose Luis Herrera	Showtime	sm	C	B+	C
Bunting nothing great, but when the other guy doesn't throw punches, you don't have to be						
8/4/06	Anthony Hanshaw W 10 Esteban Camou	Showtime	sm	C	B+	C-
Hanshaw not the most exciting guy in the bunch, but he should win the ShoBox tourney pretty easily						
8/5/06	Kassim Ouma W 10 Sechew Powell	HBO	jm	B+	B-	C+
Welcome to the big time, Sechew; now you know how Verno Phillips felt						
8/5/06	Vernon Forrest W 10 Ike Quartey	HBO	jm	B+	A-	B-
We thought Quartey won by a good margin and wouldn't be opposed to a rematch						
8/5/06	Juan Manuel Marquez KO 7 Terdsak Jandarng	Showtime	f	A	B-	B
In a perfect world, Marquez gets the winner of Barrera-Juarez II; wouldn't that be fun?						
8/5/06	Rafael Marquez KO 9 Silence Mabuza	Showtime	b	A	B+	B+
Little brother isn't just a puncher anymore; Marquez becoming a complete fighter						
8/9/06	Verno Phillips KO 12 Teddy Reid	ESPN2	jm	B-	B+	B-
You have to give Reid credit; at the end he was still trying to knock Phillips out						
8/10/06	Omar Nino W 12 Brian Viloria	OLN	jfl	A	C	C+
Hey guys, it's not like Viloria wanted to lose; if he could have punched, he would have						
8/11/06	Edner Cherry KO 12 Daniel Alicea	ESPN2	l	C+	C+	B-
This gets less impressive when you remember Naseem Hamed starched Alicea 10 years ago						
8/12/06	Vanes Martirosyan W 6 Marcus Brooks	HBO PPV	jm	C	B-	D+
Martirosyan a stiff puncher, but, based on this showing, not much else						
8/12/06	David Diaz KO 10 Jose Armando Santa Cruz	HBO PPV	l	B	A	B+
We haven't heard the HBO team so shocked into silence since Micky Ward-Alfonso Sanchez						
8/12/06	Humberto Soto KO 4 Ivan Valle	HBO PPV	jl	B	B+	B
Valle not a bad fighter, but Soto on another level; someone get this guy a title shot						
8/12/06	Oleg Maskaev KO 12 Hasim Rahman	HBO PPV	h	A-	B-	B+
Upset! Just when you think Rahman has it together, he finds a way to flop						
8/18/06	Damian Wills W 8 Cisse Salif	ESPN2	h	C	B-	C-
Wills is nothing special; and who knew Denzell Washington was so annoying?						
8/18/06	Evander Holyfield KO 2 Jeremy Bates	FOX SN	h	C+	D+	D
Hey, how weird does Evander look without the mustache?						
8/19/06	Paul Williams KO 4 Sharmba Mitchell	HBO	w	C+	D+	C-
Listening to Lennox Lewis here was the equivalent of watching him fight Zeljko Mavrovic						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

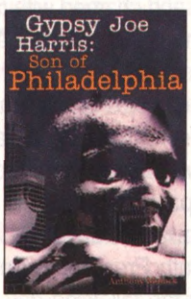
Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox Sports Net;Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino; Outdoor Life Network—OLN

Boxing Bookshelf

When Gypsy Joe Harris' name comes up, as it still does from time to time among hard-core boxing fans, and I mention that I saw a number of his bouts, the usual reaction is an incredulous look, followed by, "You actually saw Gypsy Joe fight?"

It wasn't *that* long ago, but since 1968, when Gypsy Joe threw his last competitive punch, the narrative of this unique fighter's life and death has lacked definition and grown hazy with the passing of time. Outside of Philadelphia, where Gypsy was beloved, he is thought of (when thought of at all) as just another fighter who fell victim to life in the fast lane, squandered his talent, and died young. But to anybody who saw Gypsy fight, the story can never be quite that cut and dried, because to watch him in action was an experience unlike anything you'd ever had before or ever will again. And that's something that sticks with you—forever.



I have heard that there might be a film of Gypsy's fight with Emile Griffith, but that's just a rumor. Therefore, until the publication of *Gypsy Joe Harris: Son Of Philadelphia* (AuthorHouse, 209 pages, paperback), all that was left of Gypsy were memories and faded newspaper clippings. The book, written by Gypsy's younger brother, Anthony Molock, is the first attempt to flesh out the story of this extraordinary prizefighter.

Molock is an educator in the Atlanta Public School System, not a writer, so don't expect a literary masterpiece. But as a member of the family who grew up idolizing his big brother, Molock's insider's perspective and love for Gypsy have combined to produce a work that helps bring the tragic life of the ill-fated fighter into much sharper focus.

Son Of Philadelphia is not a boxing book per se, but rather the story of a family's struggle for survival in the Philadelphia ghetto, and how one member of that family briefly soared to great heights before plunging headlong into a dark place from which he never really emerged.

For all intents and purposes, Gypsy Joe was a one-eye fighter. Molock confirms the story that his brother began to lose sight in his right eye after another kid hit him there with a brick during a squabble over a bag of Halloween candy. Gypsy had limited vision in the eye when he started boxing, but that quickly faded to black as the punches added up.

It was his need to keep his one good eye on his opponents, combined with a playful personality, that led Gypsy to develop his distinctive, highly unorthodox boxing style. Some called him a clown, but they were wrong. Gypsy was an improvisational genius who turned his handicap into an asset and created a legend in the process.

When the commission finally revoked his boxing license shortly after his lone pro defeat, to Griffith, Gypsy's fall from grace was even quicker than his rise to fame. He never found a place for himself outside of boxing and his descent into alcoholism and heroin addiction are unsparingly documented. Ironically, shortly before he died of heart failure in 1990, Gypsy, who had kicked heroin but continued to drink, tried to help Molock, who had temporarily become addicted to crack.

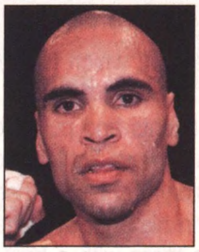
Although there are few new revelations concerning Gypsy's boxing career, *Son Of Philadelphia* provides a much better understanding of Gypsy Joe the man-child than ever before. To those of us who once packed Philadelphia venues to see him mesmerize fans and foes alike, the book is a fascinating look back at a deeply flawed and much loved hero whose memory will always be cherished by those lucky enough to have seen him fight.

(Readers interested in obtaining a copy of *Gypsy Joe Harris: Son Of Philadelphia* may do so by via e-mail at www.authorhouse.com or by phoning 1-800-839-8640)

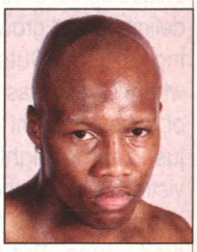
—Nigel Collins

Outside the Ropes

Lightweight contender **David Diaz** was the guest of honor at an August 25 card at the Aragon Ballroom in Chicago, Illinois, promoted by 8 Count Production. It was appropriate that Chicago native Diaz was feted at that particular venue, as two of the victories that propelled him into his HBO-televised knockout of **Jose Santa Cruz** came at the Aragon Ballroom. He stopped **Jaime Rangell** there in December 2004 and won a 10-round decision over **Silverio Ortiz** at the Aragon in March '06 ... In July, Australian super middleweight contender **Anthony Mundine** spent three days campaigning against petrol (gasoline) sniffing among Aboriginal people. The boxer visited the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, the Mount Nancy town camp, inmates at the Alice Springs jail, and the Aboriginal communities of Hermannsburg, Papunya, and Yiendumu. Businessman **Bob Lidddle**, who helped organize the visit, hailed Mundine as an outstanding role model for the indigenous community ... IBF flyweight titleholder **Vic Darchinyan** has opened a restaurant in Sydney, Australia, called "Raging Bull," which is also Darchinyan's *nom de guerre*. Aussie boxing celebrities **Jeff Fenech**, **Danny Green**, and **Billy** and **Nedal Hussein** were on hand to celebrate the opening. Partner **Gary Auby** will run the day-to-day operations, while Darchinyan concentrates on his boxing career ... Undefeated heavyweight **Roman Greenberg**, 22-0 (15), was counting his blessings after narrowly escaping two rocket attacks while spending time in Haifa, Israel, during the recent conflict with Lebanon. In one attack, the 22-year-old Greenberg was rudely awakened one morning when a rocket landed near his apartment. "My bed was shaking and the noise was deafening," said Greenberg, an Israeli based in England. A second close call occurred when he was stopped at a traffic light and rockets began to fall around his car. "I'm thinking that I'm so fast not even a Katusha rocket can catch me," joked Greenberg afterward ... The *Mirror*, a U.K. tabloid, reported that **Naseem Hamed** floored a fellow prisoner when a sparring session turned ugly. "All hell threatened to break loose," a prison source told the *Mirror*. "[Hamed] was strutting around and acting cocky." Hamed is serving 15 months for seriously injuring a man during an auto accident ... **Maria Maza**, the widow of former Colombian boxer **Jimmy Garcia**, who died as a result of head injuries he suffered in a 1995 junior lightweight bout with **Gabriel Ruelas**, is in a battle with Fiduagraria, the fiduciary that was supposed to handle the trust fund that was established with money from her husband's life insurance policies. According to Maza's lawyer, **Gloria Meneses Perez**, the interest accrued by the trust is going to people other than those legally appointed as beneficiaries. A WBC press release claimed that WBC Secretary General **Gabriel Penagaricano** and **Julio Torres**, the WBC's representative in Colombia, are trying to resolve the problem without litigation, "but the money has simply disappeared from this poor widow and children" ... Former welterweight WBA and WBC titleholder **Marlon Starling**, 47, was arrested in Hartford, Connecticut, and charged with failing to pay support for his three children. According to State Attorney General **Richard Blumenthal**, Starling owes more than $30,000 ... Former world welterweight champion **Zab Judah**, 28, was arrested as he came off the court after participating in a celebrity basketball game at Madison Square Garden in July. Judah was kept at the Midtown South Precinct overnight and taken to the Queens Family court the following day. It was unclear why a warrant had been issued for Judah, but a police source said it was a "money dispute" ... Super lightweight prospect **Vernon "The Iceman" Paris**, 18, was shot three times during an armed robbery attempt in Detroit in late-July. According to co-manager **Carlos Llinas**, Paris, 5-0 (4), was shot twice in the back and once in the leg. "Four guys came up to him and told him to give them his money," said Llinas. "He knocked one out cold, so they pulled out a gun and started shooting him. Who knows what will happen to his boxing career, but I'm just glad he's alive and responding, because Vernon is a good kid" ... **Vic Patrick**, the man **Jeff Fenech** called "the best Australian never to win a world title" died at his home in Sydney on June 2 at age of 86. Patrick, whose real name was Lucca, was of Italian decent and changed his name when he turned pro because Australia was at war with Italy and thousands of Italians in Australia were being interned. The southpaw got off to a quick start, winning 20 straight fights, 19 by knockout, to establish himself as a popular gate attraction. He won the Australian lightweight title in July '41 with a 15-round decision over **Tod Morgan** and the Australian welterweight title with a 15-round decision over **Ron McLaughlin** in April '42. In the biggest fight of his career, Patrick floored American lightweight contender **Freddie Dawson** in the 11th round, only to be stopped himself in the 12th. Patrick, 52-4-1 (45), retired following a 12-round decision over **Tommy Stenhouse** in June '48 and became a successful businessman who owned several hotels. He also became house referee at Sydney Stadium.



Mundine: Fights petrol sniffing



Judah: More trouble

Patrick: Dead at age 86

Quotable

"It didn't feel like such an honor a few minutes ago."

—Insurance salesman Jeremy Bates reflecting back on the pre-fight statement he made about fighting Evander Holyfield, shortly after Holyfield knocked him out

"I had my mouthpiece in!"

—Heavyweight Shannon Miller responding to the fact that referee Ricky Gonzalez stopped his bout with Malachy Farell because Miller slurred his words when the ref asked him if he was okay following a knockdown

Ratings Analysis

For Period Ended August 20, 2006

Heavyweights: Oleg Maskaev bolts to the number-two spot thanks to his 12th-round knockout of Hasim Rahman. Rahman (second last issue) sinks to 10th, and Chris Byrd, who hasn't beaten any of the current top-10 contenders, exits from the seven position. Byrd's departure moves Calvin Brock (eighth last issue), Samuel Peter (ninth last issue), and Nicolay Valuev (10th last issue) each up one place.

Cruiserweights: No changes.

Light heavyweights: No changes.

Super middleweights: No changes.

Middleweights: No changes.

Junior middleweights: Vernon Forrest enters at eight, based on his controversial 10-round decision over Ike Quartey (eighth last issue). The loss drops Quartey to nine and Verno Phillips (ninth last issue) to 10. Forrest's inclusion forces out Daniel Santos (10th last issue).

Welterweights: Paul Williams (10th last issue) replaces Sharmba Mitchell at nine, after stopping Mitchell in four rounds. Mitchell drops from the rankings, making room for Carlos Quintana at 10, based on his victory over hot prospect Joel Julio.

Junior welterweights: Steve Johnston (ninth last issue) exits after being stopped by Vivian Harris. This allows Souleymane M'Baye to move from 10 to nine, replacing Johnston. Streaking Demetrius Hopkins debuts at 10.

Lightweight: David Diaz (10th last issue) surges to eight, replacing Jose Santa Cruz, whom Diaz stopped in 12 rounds. Santa Cruz exits, making room for Ramazan Palyani to debut at 10.

Junior lightweights: Edwin Valero debuts at six after stopping Vicente Mosquera (sixth last issue). The addition of Valerio forces everyone rated sixth to ninth down one place and forces out Joan Guzman (10th last issue).

Featherweights: A reshuffling moves Juan Manuel Marquez from three to two, and Humberto Soto from four to three. Rodolfo Lopez debuts at four, due to his upset stoppage of Takashi Koshimoto (second last issue). Koshimoto drops to five. Lopez' addition pushes down everyone fifth through ninth one slot each and moves Thomas Mashaba (10th last issue) out of the rankings.

Junior featherweights: No changes.

Bantamweights: Wladimir Sidorenko moves from seven to five, which drops Silence Mabuza (fifth last issue) and Genaro Garcia (sixth last issue) one place each.

Junior bantamweights: No changes.

Flyweights: No changes.

Junior flyweights: Koki Kameda debuts at five, based on his victory over Juan Landaeta. Omar Nino enters at six after upsetting Brian Viloria (fifth last issue). Viloria falls to seven. Kameda and Nino's inclusion drops down Will Grigsby (sixth last issue), Jose Aguirre (seventh last issue), and Nobuaki Masuda (eighth last issue) two places each. Edgar Sosa (ninth last issue) and Muvhuso Nedzanani (10th last issue) depart.

Strawweights: Juan Landaeta (sixth last year) is now campaigning at junior flyweight. His departure moves everyone previously rated from seven through 10 up one place each and creates an opening at 10, where Eriberto Gejon arrives.

Pound-for-pound: No changes.

The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

Pound-For-Pound

1. **Floyd Mayweather**
   Welterweight
2. **Winky Wright**
   Middleweight
3. **Manny Pacquiao**
   Junior Lightweight
4. **Jermain Taylor**
   Middleweight
5. **Bernard Hopkins**
   Light Heavyweight
6. **Marco Antonio Barrera**
   Junior Lightweight
7. **Rafael Marquez**
   Bantamweight
8. **Ricky Hatton**
   Junior Welterweight/Welterweight
9. **Jose Luis Castillo**
   Junior Welterweight
10. **Joe Calzaghe**
    Super Middleweight

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to **TheRing-online.com**

The Ring Ratings

For Period Ended August 20, 2006

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

David Diaz jumps two places in the lightweight rankings after upsetting Santa Cruz

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by The Ring are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between The Ring's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors

Heavyweights

Weight Unlimited

Champ: Vacant

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 46-3 (41)
2. **OLEG MASKAEV** Staten Island, NY 33-5 (26)
3. **JAMES TONEY** Ann Arbor, MI 69-4-3 (43)
4. **SERGEI LIAKHOVICH** Belarus, 23-1 (14)
5. **LAMON BREWSTER** Los Angeles, CA 33-3 (29)
6. **JOHN RUIZ** Methuen, MA 41-6-1 (28)
7. **CALVIN BROCK** Charlotte, NC 29-0 (22)
8. **SAMUEL PETER** Las Vegas, NV 26-1 (22)
9. **NICOLAY VALUEV** Russia 44-0 (32)
10. **HASIM RAHMAN** Baltimore MD 41-6-2 (33)

Jr. Middleweights

Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **SHANE MOSLEY** Pomona, CA 43-4 (37)
2. **CORY SPINKS** St. Louis, MO 35-3 (11)
3. **ROMAN KARMAZIN** Russia 34-2-1 (21)
4. **KASSIM OUMA** W. Palm Beach, FL 25-2-1 (15)
5. **SERGEI DZINDZIRUK** Germany 31-0 (21)
6. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Los Angeles, CA 38-4 (30)
7. **FERNANDO VARGAS** Oxnard, CA 26-4 (22)
8. **VERNON FORREST** Atlanta. GA 38-2 (28)
9. **IKE QUARTEY** Ghana 37-3-1 (31)
10. **VERNO PHILLIPS** Aurora, CO 40-10-1 (21)

Featherweights

Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS JOHN** Indonesia 37-0-1 (20)
2. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 45-3-1 (34)
3. **HUMBERTO SOTO** Mexico 39-5-2 (23)
4. **RODOLFO LOPEZ** Mexico 19-2-1 (13)
5. **TAKASHI KOSHIMOTO** Japan 39-1-2 (17)
6. **INJIN CHI** South Korea 30-3-1 (18)
7. **SCOTT HARRISON** Scotland 25-2-2 (14)
8. **SPEND ABAZI** Denmark 32-1 (10)
9. **HIROYUKI ENOKI** Japan 24-0-1 (18)
10. **NICKY COOK** England 26-0 (15)

Jr. Featherweights

Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: ISRAEL VAZQUEZ Mexico 40-3 (30)

1. **SOMSAK SITHCHATCHAWAL** Thailand 46-1-1 (37)
2. **CELESTINO CABALLERO** Panama 24-2 (17)
3. **RICARDO CORDOBA** Panama 27-1-1 (18)
4. **SERGIO MANUEL MEDINA** Argentina 25-0 (15)
5. **GABULA VABAZA** South Africa 23-0-1 (5)
6. **STEVE MOLITOR** Canada 22-0 (8)
7. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON** Mexico 29-1 (26)
8. **TAKALANI NDLOVU** South Africa 26-3 (17)
9. **MICHAEL HUNTER** England 26-0-1 (12)
10. **DAISUKU YAMANAKA** Japan 19-2 (14)

Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 36-3 (32)
2. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA** Japan 20-2 (7)
3. **JHONNY GONZALEZ** Mexico 33-4 (28)
4. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand 51-3-2 (36)
5. **WLADIMIR SIDORENKO** Ukraine 19-0-1 (6)
6. **SILENCE MABUZA** South Africa 19-2 (15)
7. **GENARO GARCIA** Mexico 35-4 (20)
8. **RATANACHAI VORAPIN** Thailand 67-9 (44)
9. **POONSAWAT KRATINGAENGYM** Thailand 24-1 (15)
10. **IRENE PACHECO** Colombia 32-1 (24)

Cruiserweights

Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: O'NEIL BELL
Atlanta, GA 26-1-1 (24)

1. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama 33-3-2 (26)
2. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 19-0 (10)
3. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
France 32-3 (22)
4. **JOHNNY NELSON**
England 45-12-2 (29)
5. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
Guyana 21-2 (17)
6. **PIETRO AURINO**
Italy 34-2 (16)
7. **DAVID HAYE**
England 17-1 (16)
8. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZK**
Poland 36-1 (27)
9. **VADIM TOKAREV**
Russia 22-0-1 (15)
10. **GRIGORY DROZD**
Russia 25-0 (20)

Light Heavyweights

Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 47-4-1 (32)

1. **ANTONIO TARVER**
Orlando, FL 24-4 (18)
2. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Miami, FL 44-10-2 (29)
3. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary 25-0 (15)
4. **ROY JONES**
Pensacola, FL 50-4 (38)
5. **CLINTON WOODS**
England 39-3-1 (24)
6. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 30-0 (21)
7. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
Huntington Beach, CA 40-3 (24)
8. **PAUL BRIGGS**
Australia 25-2 (18)
9. **HUGO GARAY**
Argentina 26-2 (13)
10. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 23-0 (15)

Super Middleweights

Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: JOE CALZAGHE
Wales 41-0 (31)

1. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 37-0 (28)
2. **MARKUS BEYER**
Germany 34-2-1 (13)
3. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
Australia 26-3 (20)
4. **DANNY GREEN**
Australia 21-3 (19)
5. **JEFF LACY**
St. Petersburg, FL 21-1 (17)
6. **MANNY SIACA**
Puerto Rico 20-5 (18)
7. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 23-0 (17)
8. **MGER MKRTCHIAN**
Armenia 23-2 (17)
9. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Canada 16-0 (15)
10. **CARL FROCH**
England 19-0 (15)

Middleweights

Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: JERMAIN TAYLOR
Little Rock, AR 25-0-1 (17)

1. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 50-3-1 (25)
2. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Germany 21-0 (17)
3. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 61-6 (41)
4. **SAM SOLIMAN**
Australia 32-8 (13)
5. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 25-2 (11)
6. **EDISON MIRANDA**
Colombia 26-0 (23)
7. **AMIN ASIKAINEN**
Finland 18-0 (14)
8. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 22-1 (10)
9. **KINGSLEY IKEKE**
Canada 23-2 (13)
10. **SCOTT DANN**
England 24-2 (17)

Welterweights

Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: CARLOS BALDOMIR
Argentina 43-9-6 (13)

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
Grand Rapids, MI 36-0 (24)
2. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
Mexico 33-4 (24)
3. **ZAB JUDAH**
Brooklyn, NY 34-4 (25)
4. **RICKY HATTON**
England 41-0 (30)
5. **LUIS COLLAZO**
Queens, NY 26-2 (12)
6. **KERMIT CINTRON**
Reading, PA 26-1 (24)
7. **OKTAY URKAL**
Germany 37-3 (11)
8. **ARTURO GATTI**
Jersey City, NJ 40-8 (31)
9. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
Augusta, GA 31-0 (23)
10. **CARLOS QUINTANA**
Puerto Rico 23-0 (18)

Jr. Welterweights

Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: RICKY HATTON
England 41-0 (30)

1. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico 27-0 (22)
2. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
Mexico 54-7-1 (47)
3. **JUNIOR WITTER**
England 33-1-2 (19)
4. **CARLOS MAUSSA**
Colombia 19-3 (16)
5. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
Brooklyn, NY 27-2-1 (18)
6. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
Washington, D.C. 31-4-1 (17)
7. **LOVEMORE NDOU**
Australia 43-8-1 (28)
8. **JUAN LAZCANO**
El Paso, TX 36-3-1 (27)
9. **SOULEYMANE M'BAYE**
France 34-1 (19)
10. **DEMETRIUS HOPKINS**
Philadelphia PA 24-0-1 (10)

Lightweights

Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: DIEGO CORRALES
Las Vegas, NV 40-3 (33)

1. **JUAN DIAZ**
Houston, TX 30-0 (15)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
Miami, FL 33-3-1 (21)
3. **JULIO DIAZ**
Coachella, CA 33-3 (24)
4. **ACELINO FREITAS**
Brazil 38-1 (32)
5. **ZAHIR RAHEEM**
Las Vegas, NV 27-2 (16)
6. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
Mexico 42-3 (29)
7. **ISAAC HLATSHWAYO**
South Africa 25-0 (9)
8. **DAVID DIAZ**
Chicago, IL 32-1-1 (17)
9. **ALDO RIOS**
Argentina 41-4 (9)
10. **RAMAZAN PALYANI**
Philadelphia PA 14-0-1 (8)

Jr. Lightweights

Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 42-3-2 (32)
2. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
Mexico 62-4 (42)
3. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico 48-4 (34)
4. **JORGE BARRIOS**
Argentina 46-2-1 (33)
5. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
Houston, TX 26-2 (19)
6. **EDWIN VALERO**
Venezuela 20-0 (20)
7. **VICENTE MOSQUERA**
Panama 24-2-1 (12)
8. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
Thailand 46-3-1 (37)
9. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
Bellflower, CA 41-6-1 (24)
10. **ALEX ARTHUR**
Scotland 23-1 (17)

Jr. Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
North Korea 32-3-1 (8)
2. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
Japan 8-0 (5)
3. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
Mexico 30-2 (16)
4. **LUIS PEREZ**
Nicaragua 24-1 (15)
5. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
Mexico 32-2-1 (24)
6. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
Venezuela 28-2 (26)
7. **KATSUSHIGE KAWASHIMA**
Japan 30-4 (20)
8. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
South Africa 28-3 (18)
9. **JOSE NAVARRO**
Los Angeles, CA 23-2 (10)
10. **GERRY PENALOSA**
Philippines 50-5-2 (33)

Flyweights

Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
Thailand 62-2 (32)
2. **LORENZO PARRA**
Venezuela 27-0 (17)
3. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
Australia 26-0 (21)
4. **JORGE ARCE**
Mexico 44-3-1 (34)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina 22-0-2 (15)
6. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
France 20-1 (7)
7. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
Japan 28-3-1 (13)
8. **VICTOR BURGOS**
Mexico 39-14-3 (22)
9. **LUIS MALDONADO**
Mexico 33-1-1 (25)
10. **DAISUKE NAITO**
Japan 29-2-2 (19)

Jr. Flyweights

Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ**
Panama 22-1 (17)
2. **HUGO CAZARES**
Mexico 23-3-1 (17)
3. **NELSON DIEPPA**
Puerto Rico 23-2-2 (13)
4. **ULISES SOLIS**
Mexico 22-1-2 (16)
5. **KOKI KAMEDA**
Japan 12-0 (10)
6. **OMAR NINO**
Mexico 24-2-1 (10)
7. **BRIAN VILORIA**
Waipahu, HI 19-1 (12)
8. **WILL GRIGSBY**
St. Paul, MN 18-3-1 (7)
9. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
Mexico 34-5-1 (20)
10. **NOBUAKI MASUDA**
Japan 22-3-1 (3)

Strawweights

Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **IVAN CALDERON**
Puerto Rico 26-0 (6)
2. **YUTAKA NIIDA**
Japan 20-1-3 (8)
3. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
Indonesia 51-7-4 (23)
4. **EAGLE KYOWA**
Japan 16-1 (6)
5. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan 17-2 (7)
6. **OMAR SOTO**
Mexico 14-3-1 (10)
7. **DANIEL REYES**
Colombia 36-4-1 (30)
8. **RODEL MAYOL**
Philippines 22-1 (17)
9. **ISAAC BUSTOS**
Mexico 24-8-3 (13)
10. **ERIBERTO GEJON**
Philippines 21-1-1 (13)

By Jeff Ryan

Block And Roll All Night, And Parry Every Day

The worlds of music and boxing are similar in a lot of ways. They're both cutthroat businesses filled with controversy, drama, gossip, divas, scoundrels, legends, purists, corporate sellouts, geniuses who toil in obscurity, superstars who are overrated, cult figures, entourages, groupies, hangers-on, and great souvenir T-shirts.

The two industries are enough alike that promoter Cedric Kushner and manager Shelly Finkel went from staging concerts early in their careers to putting together prizefights, and never broke stride. Enough alike that Roy Jones, Oscar De La Hoya, and Al Bernstein cut albums, and the group Sugar Ray took its name from Sugar Ray Leonard.

Have you ever watched *Behind The Music*, the series on VH1? It's the greatest soap opera ever, except that it's real. All that intrigue, treachery, and craziness set against a backdrop of offbeat personalities striving to entertain/become rich/make history. It's surprising that boxing never came up with a show like that, a *Behind The Mucous*, or something. The episodes on Mike Tyson and Floyd Mayweather could fill two full seasons alone.

Still not convinced of the similarities? Well, here are some more:

Dinosaurs: At 44, Evander Holyfield looks about as silly trying to block a punch as 63-year-old Mick Jagger does tearing off his shirt. "The Real Deal" listens to Paul McCartney sing, " ... when I'm 64" and wonders if it should be the music that heralds his ring entrance two decades from now. (At which time, he'll still be convinced he can recapture the heavyweight belt.) We don't want to say Holyfield's old, but we could swear that Bill Haley and the Comets sang the National Anthem at his pro debut.

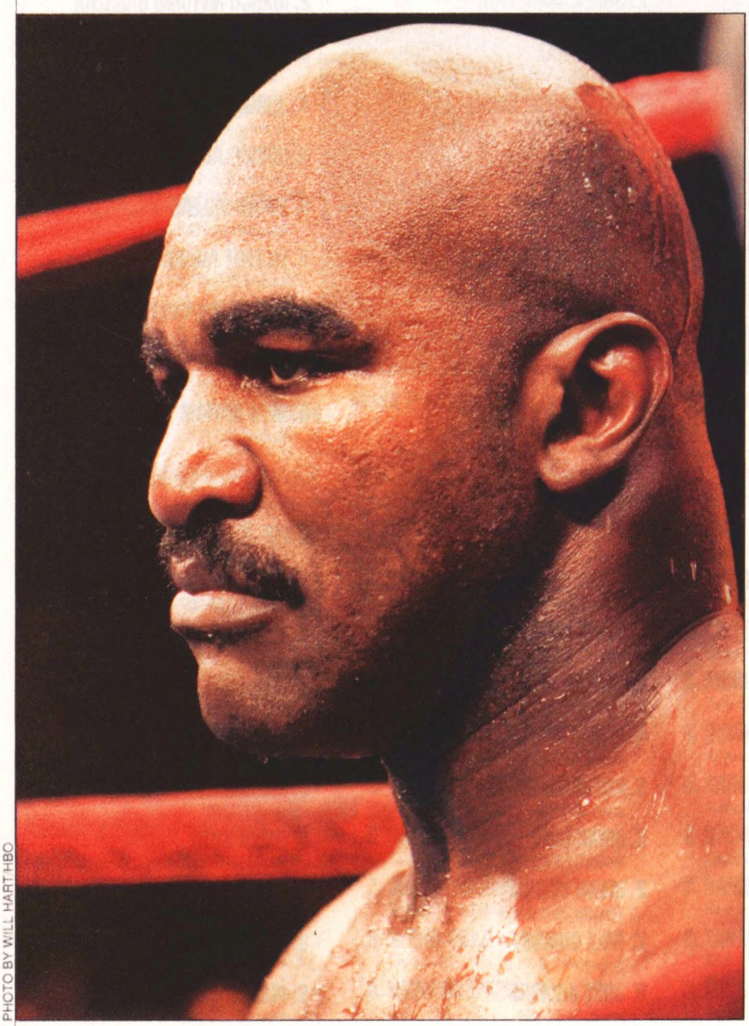


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Is Holyfield the Mick Jagger of boxing?

Nobody's ever put out to pasture: Actually, they are, but the pasture has a stage on it and is usually hosting a state fair, bratwurst festival, or motorcycle jump. Where once our buff and beautiful rock gods played the Madison Square Gardens, Radio City Music Halls, and Hollywood Bowls, today they're gray and wrinkled and working gigs in the ass end of nowhere for a fraction of what they could command in their primes.

Yes, those *were* Grand Funk Railroad and Foreigner playing state fairs this past summer. The boxing version of, "Oh, how the mighty have fallen," is the once-great Jones, whose last bout, against Prince Badi Ajamu, was relegated to *Boise, Idaho*. Bozeman, Montana, we assume, is clamoring for his next outing.

Legendary claustrophobic gatherings: The music world gave us Woodstock in 1969, three days of "peace, love, and music" on a dairy farm in New York State. It's open to debate as to whether there were 400,000 or 500,000 in attendance, but when nobody has showered for 72 hours and there are no toilet facilities, really, what's the difference?

The fight game had its own version of Woodstock, one night of violence, hatred, and chin music, when a throng of 130,000 packed Mexico City's Azteca

Stadium in 1993 to watch Julio Cesar Chavez maul Greg Haugen. There *were* functioning bathrooms that night, but fans urinating into paper cups and throwing them didn't seem to care.

Reality television shows: A bunch of marginal talents are brought together in a needlessly drawn-out competition, the show plays up the most melodramatic aspects of their lives, they find themselves at the mercy of the judges, a champion is eventually crowned, and it's obvious that the established stars of the industry don't have a darned thing to worry about. That's *American Idol.* And *The Contender.*

High-profile zombies: Ozzy Osbourne is to heavy metal what Muhammad Ali is to heavyweights. Unfortunately, he makes about as much sense when he talks. One guy took too many punches, and the other too many mind-altering substances. Probably neither would be alive today if not for an incredibly devoted wife. But put "The Blizzard Of Oz" on a concert stage or give "The Greatest" an audience for his magic tricks or playful sparring, and a couple of dead men walking turn into showmen again.

Guaranteed blood: Gene Simmons never fails to deliver during a KISS concert. The same can be said for Ricky Hatton and Arturo Gatti during a fight.

Sexy front women: Rock has Gwen Stefani and boxing has Laila Ali, though the back of Laila isn't too bad either.

Price gouging: Fans are gouged worse than a table full of pink grapefruits at a breakfast buffet. Marco Antonio Barrera-Rocky Juarez II was a great matchup, but it sure wasn't worth $49.95 on pay-per-view. Nor was Jones-Ajamu, a network-TV quality contest, deserving of our $24.95. But if you think that's nutty, how about a *Boz Scaggs* concert ticket going for $56.50 a few months ago? Or *Hootie & The Blowfish* asking the same price? The last time either of those acts had a hit, the roadies were hauling their sound equipment from venue to venue in a covered wagon.

Spelling difficulties: Hip-hop, with the likes of Ludacris and Timbaland, has sent more elementary school spelling teachers to the bottle than you can shake a blackboard pointer at. But Jhonny Gonzalez and Ulises Solis also make you wonder if birth certificates ought to start being run past copy editors.

Undeserving hall of fame inductees: At the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, people pass the exhibit honoring ZZ Top or the Sex Pistols and a) do a double-take, b) suspect that somebody is playing a joke on them, or c) ask if the people who did the voting were hard of hearing. At the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York, it's Barry McGuigan who engenders that same sense of bewilderment, though the visitors wonder if the voters were blind.

Late lamented Saturday afternoon institutions: Where have you gone *American Bandstand* with the world's oldest teenager, Dick Clark? Where have you gone matinee boxing telecasts on CBS, with the world's youngest-looking old guy, Tim Ryan?

Oddballs named Prince: The rock star once replaced his name with a symbol and insisted that he be called, "The Artist Formerly Known As Prince." Meanwhile, "The Knockout Artist Formerly Known As Prince Naseem Hamed" sits in a British prison after being sentenced to 15 months for driving like a maniac and causing a car crash that nearly killed a former gym mate. Hamed's name has been replaced not by a symbol, but by a number.

Hey, you've been a great audience. See you next month. Get home safe. Good night! *Wham! Bam! Boom!* (The sound of my computer keyboard being smashed on the stage.) ■

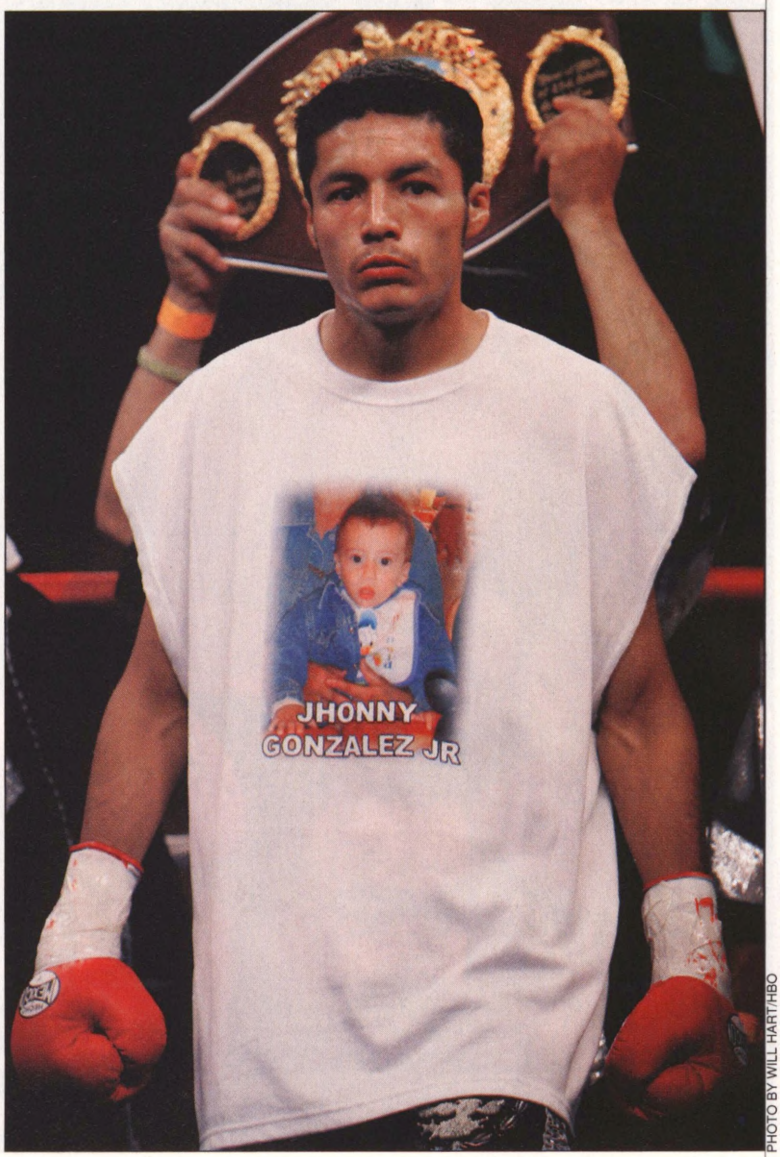


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Jhonny Gonzalez spells trouble for his opponents

By Ivan Goldman

Johnny Tapia: Man Of Letters

Visiting Johnny Tapia in his dressing room after a victory was, in my experience, always a disjointed occasion. The joy that should have been there was largely absent. Up in the ring he'd be ecstatic, famously parading opponents around on his shoulders, including the ones who'd fouled him without mercy. But in the short time it took him to reach his dressing room, Tapia, faced with the wider world beyond the ropes, could already turn melancholy.

His autobiography, *Mi Vida Loca: The Crazy Life Of Johnny Tapia*, which he wrote with Bettina Gilois, does a nice job of explaining Tapia's unexplainable life and the source of his edgy aura. Often the book exudes the same sweet sorrow he does. It's sometimes up to the reader to separate reality from nightmare. Tapia's memories don't come with a map. I'm told there's also a movie deal.

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

The fight is over and Tapia's mood is about to change

Even in a Charles Dickens novel, Tapia would be an extreme example of an abused street urchin—motherless, fatherless, and passed around like a dog. Fed like a dog too. That's pretty much a textbook plan to manufacture a brute. Yet he didn't box like a brute. He boxed like an artist. If Mozart or Renoir were fighters, they'd have fought like Tapia. He was something to watch, blending offense and defense into seamless mayhem. He breathed a fire of action and intensity, and fans loved him in both stages of his career. After his last cocaine suspension in 1990 he suffered a longer layoff than either Muhammad Ali or Mike Tyson. When he checked back in four years later, his face had aged 10 years, but he was the same ring-master of his youth.

Tapia, 39, is now a shell of his former shell. In his last outing he was stopped in round two by Sandro Marcos. It was Marcos' only victory in his last seven contests. Tapia's probably retired, but asking him a straightforward question about his future would be like asking a turtle to tea. Lots of folks claim to be quoted out of context, but quoting Tapia at all is outside the context because his words pour out in a disconnected stream that may or may not be linked to ideas. Reporters who quote him word for word tend to spew out only more confusion.

It was while he gave Danny Romero a

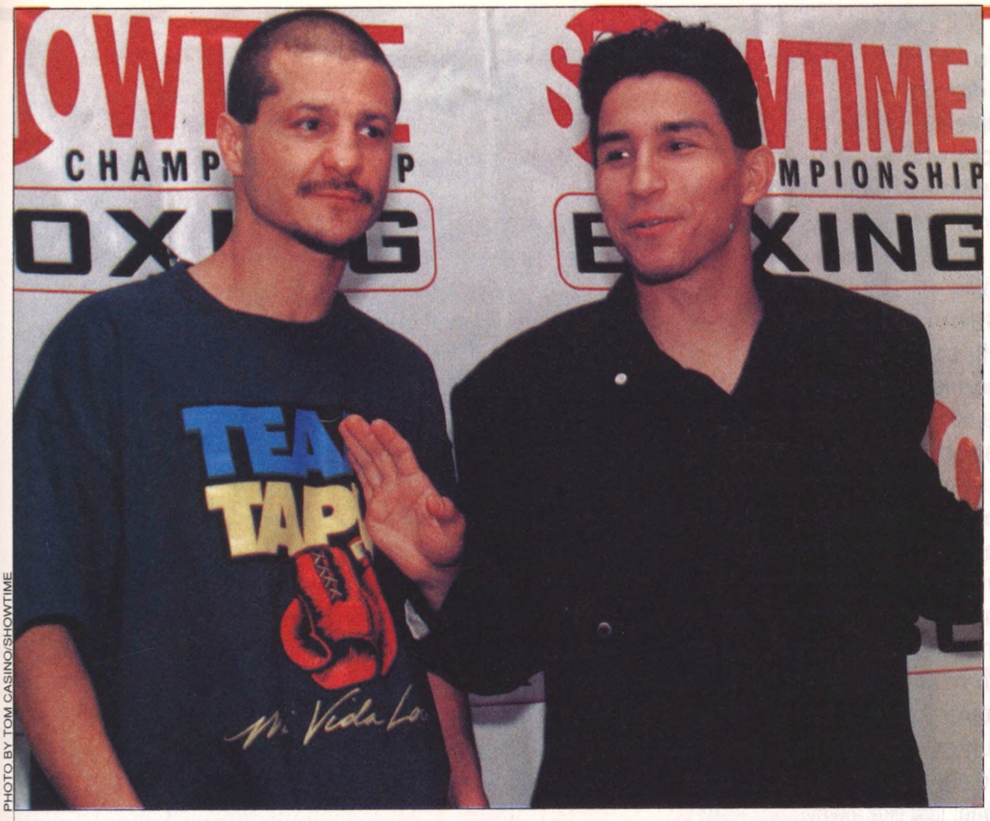


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Tapia made friends with Romero soon after beating him up

boxing lesson back in 1997 that I discovered the identity of the world's greatest fight fan, *La Opinion*'s Ramiro Gonzalez, who'd wagered $50 on big-hitting Romero. I sat next to Gonzalez in the Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas, and as the fight progressed, Gonzalez began excitedly cheering for Tapia. "I thought you bet on Romero," I said.

"Johnny's boxing so beautifully," he replied, "I have to root for him."

Outside the ropes, Tapia emits some other-worldly element planted long ago, an inner demon that won't let him relax. It's turned him into a human maelstrom, an electric storm that traverses the Earth, crackling and snapping with danger, love, fear, hate, compassion. All that's missing is moderation. Tapia's emotions are in the red zone most of the time, sometimes alternating from ecstasy to despair in seconds and often blasting an atonal chorus of anxiety.

Johnny had promised to torture betting favorite Romero, and came close to saying he would be out to blind him. Later, after dominating and humiliating his cross-town Albuquerque rival, Johnny decided he loved Romero after all and made him a pal. On the other hand, he loves his wife, Teresa, but he once pulled a gun on her. So when he says he's a pal, what, precisely, does that mean?

Yet Tapia adores people. He's fan-friendly, and when he's not promising to blind someone, has a soft heart. It's hard to know what to make of Johnny Tapia. How will he even make it though the next 24 hours? That's always the question. But something pulls him through—through suicide attempts, hard drugs, jail, sinister contacts, craziness, suspensions, and the malice of the hard life that formed him.

The Albuquerque cops thought they had him when he sold their undercover guys what they thought was a brick of

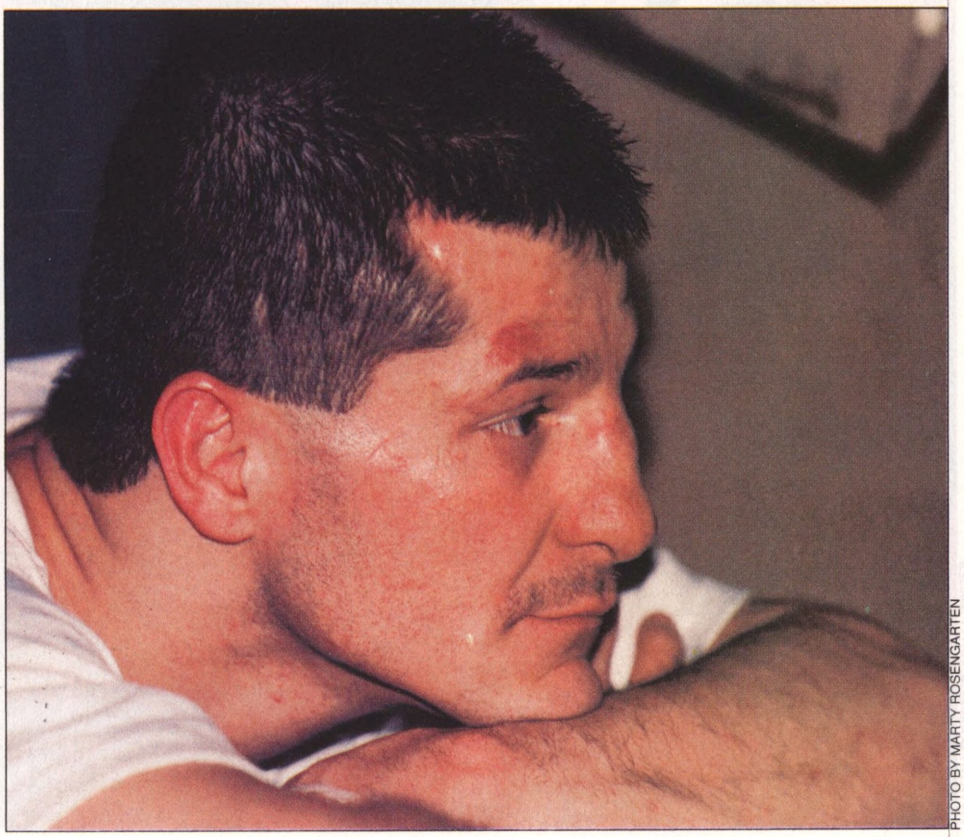


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Did Tapia exorcise any demons writing his autobiography?

cocaine. Sorry, boys, the lab informed them, go home and take a bath because Johnny just sold you a cake of soap. Johnny was a world-class contender at the time. When all those nukes finally go off, Tapia, who was born on a Friday the 13th, will crawl out of the rubble, spit out a tooth or two, and go find breakfast.

Safety vs. Cash: We never learned the whole story after safety advocates Dr. Flip Homansky and Dr. Margaret Goodman were both swept out of their Nevada State Athletic Commission boxing jobs last year. Though they tried to hold back the tide of Nevada's loosening safety procedures, they weren't whistle-blowers. So even after the system spat them out, they remained circumspect. Las Vegas' founding fathers were gangsters and gamblers whose code of penetrating silence has a life of its own.

"Too many people in boxing have lost their focus," was Goodman's vague summary of the circumstances when she and her Significant Other Homansky received awards from the Boxing Writers Association of America earlier this year. Those awards to the premature departees should have embarrassed the casino moguls and their political hirelings. But snakes aren't embarrassed about slithering, and casinos hum through good times and bad, just like always.

All over the country politicians and those who hire them have loosened the rules to allow officeholders to openly solicit cash and then perform government favors for donors. It's mostly legal, as long as the donations aren't mentioned during conversations about the favors. This laughable distinction spreads the stink of corruption in all directions, including fighter safety.

Reaping considerable profits from their boxing shows, casinos and promoters share an aversion to complications. Rigid safety regs, which might, for example, force them to examine the legitimacy of medical forms coming out of Mexico, are one of those complications.

Ireland's Boxing Tribe: My family and I recently vacationed in Ireland, where I spent some wonderful hours talking boxing with fans in Cleere's Pub in Kilkenny. There's something immensely satisfying about finding soulmates in a foreign land speaking your language, and I'm not just talking about English.

Irish fans get most of the big American fights on TV, but have to navigate a bewildering maze of time zones and channel listings to find them in the wee hours of the morning. And they still speak fondly of Wayne McCullough, the Ulster Protestant who waved the flag of mostly Catholic Ireland when he won the Olympic Silver Medal in 1992.

Magoos: In his excellent article on the physical comeback of severely injured Filipino bantamweight Alvin

PHOTO BY DOUG BENC/GETTY IMAGES

Dr. Goodman is gone from the Nevada commission, but not from the pages of THE RING

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Goldman ran into some McCullough fans while vacationing in Ireland

Felicilda, writer Ted Lerner, in the June 2006 issue of THE RING, focussed attention on the skimpy safety procedures in place at shows in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand. So it's worth asking why alphabet gangs, all of which claim to cherish the well-being of fighters, sanction bouts in locations that are about as safe for competing fighters as a stroll through a minefield. WBA featherweight titlist Chris John, for example, fought three of his last four title bouts in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, California, which puts on more boxing shows than any other state, has had no athletic commission since June. The Department of Consumer Affairs—the same people who monitor customer complaints about shocker hair dryers, stillborn car batteries, and wilted lettuce, regulates bouts. This proves once again that no bill is too stupid to get through the California Legislature, a body of amateurs whose terms are limited to six years in the Assembly and eight years in the Senate. Just about the time members find their way to the rest room without a map, they are thrust into the world to capitalize on all the sleazy connections they made during their short-lived public "service" in Sacramento.

The good news is that the present non-system of boxing regulation will end in January. After only a few weeks of wandering about in the dark, the besieged consumer-ologists figured out boxing is more complicated than they figured, so the Legislature hastily redrew its nutty cost-cutting scheme, and the commission will return. Commissioner John Frierson, who actually knows the difference between a left hook and a lacrosse stick, has been nursing the program through the death-to-rebirth stage, along with Armando Garcia, a knowledgeable fellow whose job was eliminated shortly after he was recruited from Florida. Sounds like some of my career moves. "A lot of these people," Frierson said of his former colleagues on the commission, "just haven't got a clue." Meanwhile, throughout the rest of this year, it might be prudent to move the state's boxing shows to the island of Borneo, where talented witch doctors apply all the latest medical wizardry to WBA-sanctioned bouts.

Knowing The Score: California referee Marty Sammon, who fought in the amateurs, told me this one: "I had a fight in Chico, where I beat the hell out of a local guy. I mean this guy barely made it to the final bell. Then he got the decision. I saw one of the judges afterward and I asked him why he scored it that way. He said, 'Hey, you're leaving tomorrow. Me, I've got a business here.'" ■

PHOTO BY PEARCI BASTIANY

Sammon knows how to spin a good yarn

[Camera Clicks]

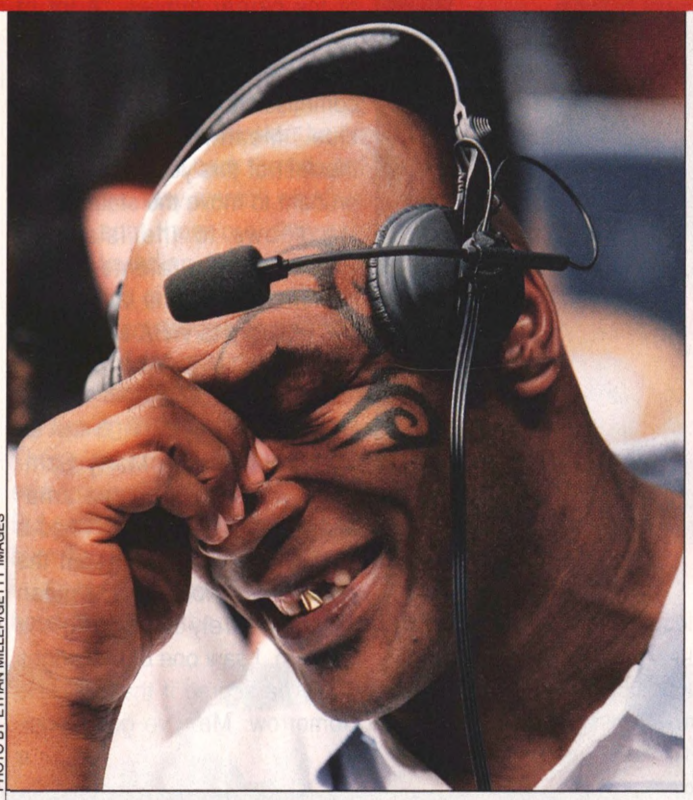


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Our worst fears for Mike Tyson's financial state have been realized: He's now been reduced to taking orders at the McDonald's drive-thru window. He's gone from "I want to eat your children" to "Do you want fries with that?" Okay, so that's not really what the headset is for; Tyson was a color commentator on one of the broadcast teams for the Oleg Maskaev-Hasim Rahman fight. So it seems he does still have some career options before the fast-food world comes calling.

PHOTO BY KOICHI KAMOSHIDA/GETTY IMAGES

Don't blow your nose into that towel, son. That's what the belt over your other shoulder is for! Koki Kameda, fresh off a controversial victory over Juan Landaeta for a vacant WBA strap of some sort, attends to his battle wounds during the postfight press conference in Yokohama, Japan.

PHOTO BY FRIEDEMANN VOGEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Unfortunately, this photo is zoomed in too close to be able to see Martin Short and Harry Shearer on either size of Wladimir Klitschko, also pointing as the three of them practice their men's synchronized swimming routine. (Don't you just wish you could hear Wladimir sheepishly saying, "I'm not a strong swimmer"?) Actually, this photo was taken during a game of water polo on the first day of the Aquatics 2006 in Hamburg, Germany, where Klitschko showed he's a fine athlete on land or on water.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

One of our absolute favorite things about ring ropes: They force the round-card girls to bend over every time they come in and out of the squared circle. (That is, unless some of the more athletic girls want to get creative and go for the Naseem Hamed springing-front-flip entrance.)

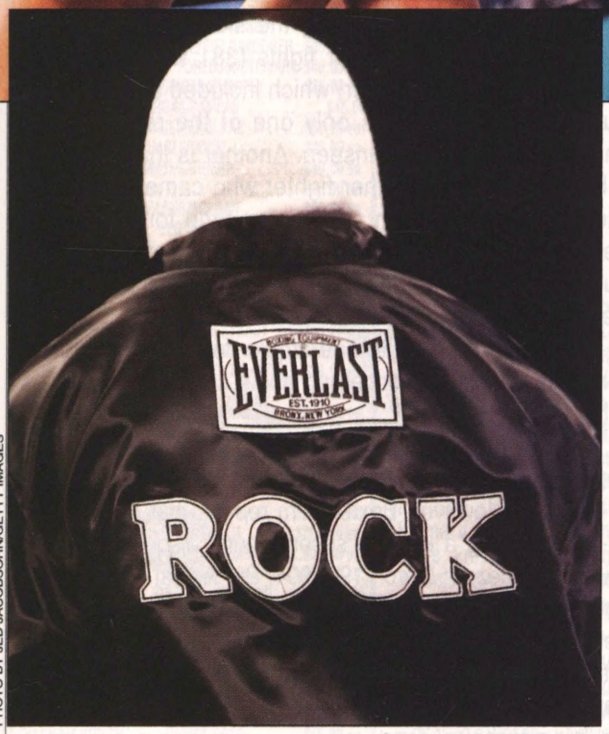


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Apparently taking a political stand against Ted Turner's colorization of old movies, 2004 Olympian Rock Allen appeared only in black-and-white as he entered the ring for his July fight against Henry Mitchell. No truth to the rumor that Oleg Maskaev is targeting a fight with Allen next just because of his outstanding success rate against fighters named "Rock."

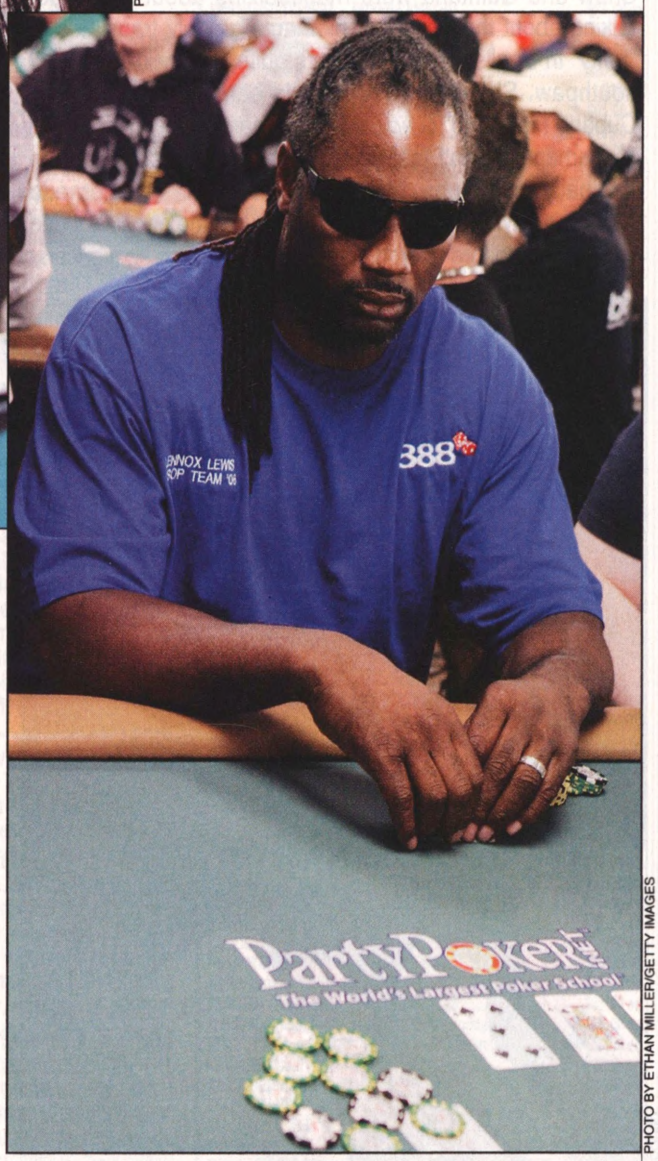


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

This is one competition where being 6'5" and 250 pounds doesn't help you one bit, Lennox. Former heavyweight champ Lennox Lewis was among the 8,773 hopefuls who tested their luck in the World Series of Poker Main Event in late-July, but like about two-thirds of the field, Lewis didn't survive Day One. Still, we bet he could beat the crap out of Jamie Gold, the nerdy former Hollywood agent who won the $12-million first prize.

By Mike Houser

Jose Antonio Izquierdo Lightweight

Three hours before Jose Antonio Izquierdo was due to step into the ring with Jonathan Nelson, his new American promoter, Gary Shaw, was relaxing in his 16th-floor suite at MontBleu Resort Casino and Spa in Stateline, Nevada. With Shaw was Jaime Quintana, an adviser to IBF bantamweight titleholder Rafael Marquez and his brother, featherweight Juan Manuel Marquez. Shaw and Quintana were rhapsodizing about Izquierdo, talking about the irony that his name roughly translates to "Lefty" in English, and how that's quite a coincidence for a southpaw. Shaw, however, would soon find out that "El Cubano Mexicano" is actually a righthander.

Perhaps it didn't matter, as Izquierdo, a Mexican citizen originally from Cuba, blew through Nelson like a tornado through a haystack. It was all over 2:10 into the opening round after Izquierdo tore apart his foe with a 28-punch sequence at the MontBleu Outdoor Sports Pavilion on the undercard of a Showtime event featuring the Marquez brothers.

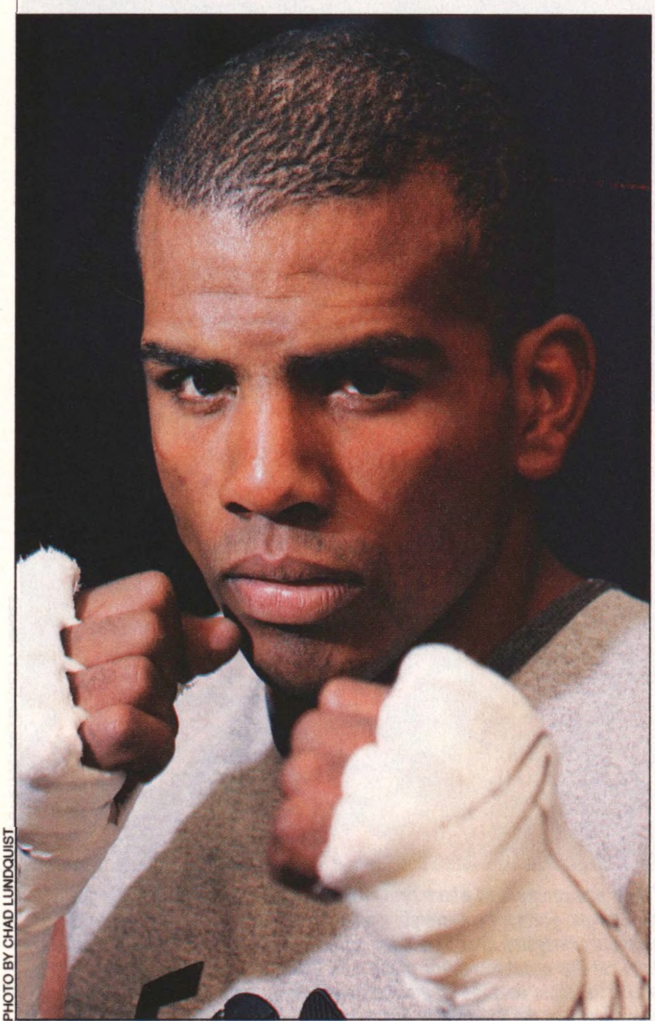


PHOTO BY CHAD LUNDQUIST

Maybe this is the last surprise for Shaw, who signed Izquierdo sight unseen. And maybe not. Izquierdo is said to be 27 years old, but a look at FightFax and boxrec.com shows that unless someone made a mistake in translation, he is 28.

"Now that I've met him," said Shaw, "he looks like he's 20. I asked him to say he's 20, so we can pass him off for a 20-year-old phenom. He has skin like Harry Belafonte."

It's true. Whether he's 27 or 28, Izquierdo does look 20 and bears nothing resembling the skin of a boxer who reportedly had 388 amateur fights (381 wins). Actually, Izquierdo's amateur career, which included a stint on the Cuban national team, is only one of the reasons why Shaw signed him sight unseen. Another is that Izquierdo is being guided by another fighter who came from Cuba and became a Mexican citizen, two-time former welterweight champion Jose Napoles. Plus, Shaw knows and trusts Izquierdo's trainer, Eduardo Moreno, and his Mexican promoter, Victor Zavalza.

Shaw doesn't need to see Izquierdo's birth certificate, nor is he particularly concerned about some discrepancies in his record.

Following the Nelson fight, Shaw's publicist, Fred Sternburg, sent out a press release that claimed Izquierdo is 21-0-1 (18). However, Boxrec.com reports that Izquierdo is 14-1 (13), listing a loss via second-round disqualification to Jaime Sanchez on March 19, 2004. But Anibal Miramontes, who runs FightFax, placed a call to Mexico City before the Nelson fight and came up with a different result. Izquierdo initially lost the Sanchez fight by TKO on cuts. The result was changed to a loss by disqualification. Now the official result is a technical draw.

"His promoter in Mexico says he had trouble getting Izquierdo opponents and that he has seven fights off the record," Shaw said. "Whatever the record is, he's definitely

(Continued on Page 90)

Pro Record

2004		
Feb. 27	Jorge Reyna, Juarez, Mexico	KO 1
March 19	Jaime Sanchez, Tlalnepantla, Mex.	Tech. Draw 2
April 30	Ramon Arrieta, Juarez	KO 4
May 22	Jaime Sanchez, Mexico City, Mexico	KO 1
Aug. 4	Ivan Molina, Juarez	KO 1
Aug. 27	Juan Jose Mendez, Juarez	W 10
Nov. 26	Jose Luis Arreola, Juarez	KO 2
2005		
Fe. 25	Ruben Lopez, Juarez	KO 2
March 12	Juan Carlos Aranday, Juarez	KO 4
June 3	Manuel Boncanegra, Juarez	KO 2
June 30	Ulises Jimenez, Polanco, Mexico	KO 1
2006		
June 4	Miguel Angel Galindo, Juarez	KO 1
June 23	Alejandro Pena, Nogales, AZ	KO 3
July 1	Jesus Ortega, Juarez	KO 1
Aug. 5	Jonathan Nelson, Stateline, NV	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
15	14	0	1	13

BOXING FIGHT POSTERS, PROGRAMS, ART PRINTS, T-SHIRTS, PHOTOS & AUTOGRAPHS

AUTOGRAPHED BOXING GLOVES
(Single Gloves, Guaranteed Authentic)

Roberto Duran or Michael Spinks ...$150.00 ea.
Joe Frazier or Jake LaMotta ...$175.00 ea.
Muhammad Ali ...$600.00
Marvin Hagler or Bernard Hopkins ...$150.00 ea.
Sugar Ray Leonard or Shane Mosley ...$125.00 ea.
Vinny Pazienza or Tommy Morrison ...$100.00 ea.
Mike Tyson ...$250.00
Larry Holmes or Arturo Gatti ...$125.00 ea.
Oscar de la Hoya or Roy Jones ...$195.00 ea.
Carmen Basilio or Vito Antuofermo ...$95.00 ea.
Archie Moore or Lennox Lewis ...$200.00 ea.
George Foreman or Evander Holyfield ...$325.00 ea.
Felix Trinidad or Fernando Vargas ...$175.00
Vinny Paz or Joey Gamache ...$75.00 ea.
Willie Pep or Kid Gavilan ...$175.00
Hector Camacho or Alexis Arguello ...$125.00

FIGHT PROGRAMS

ALI/MATHIS or ALI/LISTON II ...$400.00 ea.
ALI/COOPER II or ALI/LONDON ...$350.00 ea.
ALI/FOREMAN or ALI/BUGNER (Closed Circuits) ...$100.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER or ALI/INOKI (Closed Circuits) ...$150.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER or ALI/MILDENBERGER ...$1000.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER II or MARCIANO/CHARLES ...$500.00 ea.
ALI/FRAZIER III (Closed Circuit) ...$100.00
ALI/HOLMES or ALI/NORTON III ...$125.00 ea.
ALI/NORTON (warehouse find) Now just ...$75.00
ALI/NORTON II or ALI/YOUNG ...$600.00 ea.
ALI/QUARRY II or TYSON/GREEN ...$500.00 ea.
ALI/ROBINSON or BASILIO/DEMARCO ...$450.00 ea.
ALI/SPINKS (VG) or ALI/SPINKS II ...$250.00 ea.
BENN/MCCLELLAN or HAGLER/HAMSHO II ...$50.00 ea.
BOWE/GOLOTA I or II ...$35.00 ea.
CAMACHO/DURAN or CAMACHO/RAMIREZ ...$25.00 ea.
CAMACHO/ROSARIO, plus Tyson ...$50.00
CARBAJAL/GONZALEZ, Delahoya/J. Maywheather ...$50.00
CHAVEZ/CAMACHO or DELAHOYA/TRINIDAD ...$40.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/KAMAU or PAZ/LUCAS ...$10.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/MAYWHEATHER II or SAAD/BRAXTON ...$25.00 ea.
CHAVEZ/TAYLOR or CHAVEZ/RANDALL ...$35.00 ea.
DELAHOYA PRO DEBUT or MARCIANO/CHARLES II ...$500.00 ea
DELAHOYA/CHAVEZ II or DELAHOYA/CARR ...$30.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/GATTI or DELAHOYA/CHARPENTIER ...$25.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/QUARTEY or DELAHOYA/TYSON ...$45.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/MOSLEY or DELAHOYA/MOSLEY II ...$35.00 ea.
DELAHOYA/WHITAKER or HOLYFIELD/MOORER ...$45.00 ea.
DURAN/GONZALEZ '99 or FOREMAN/STEWART ...$45.00 ea.
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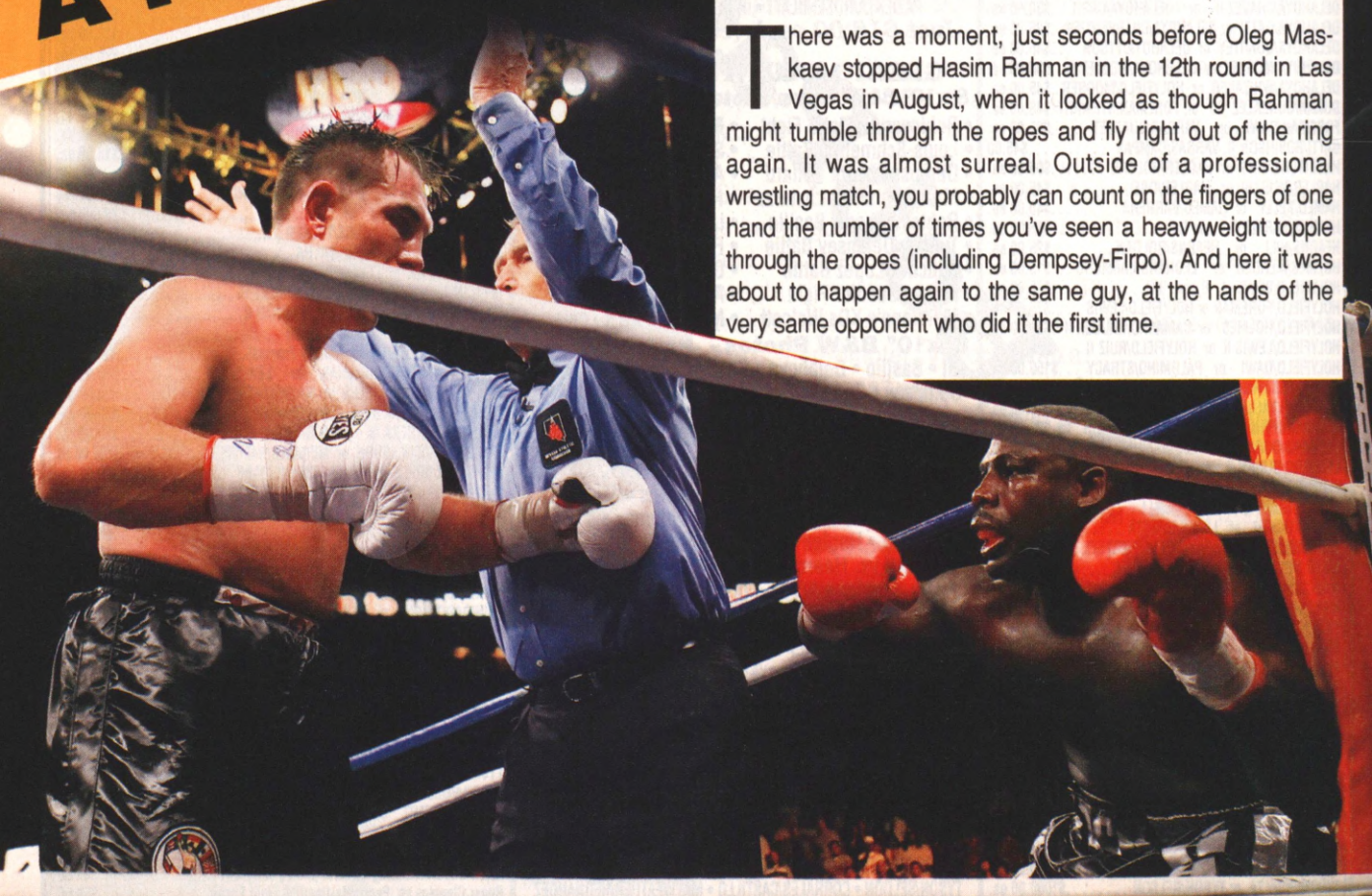
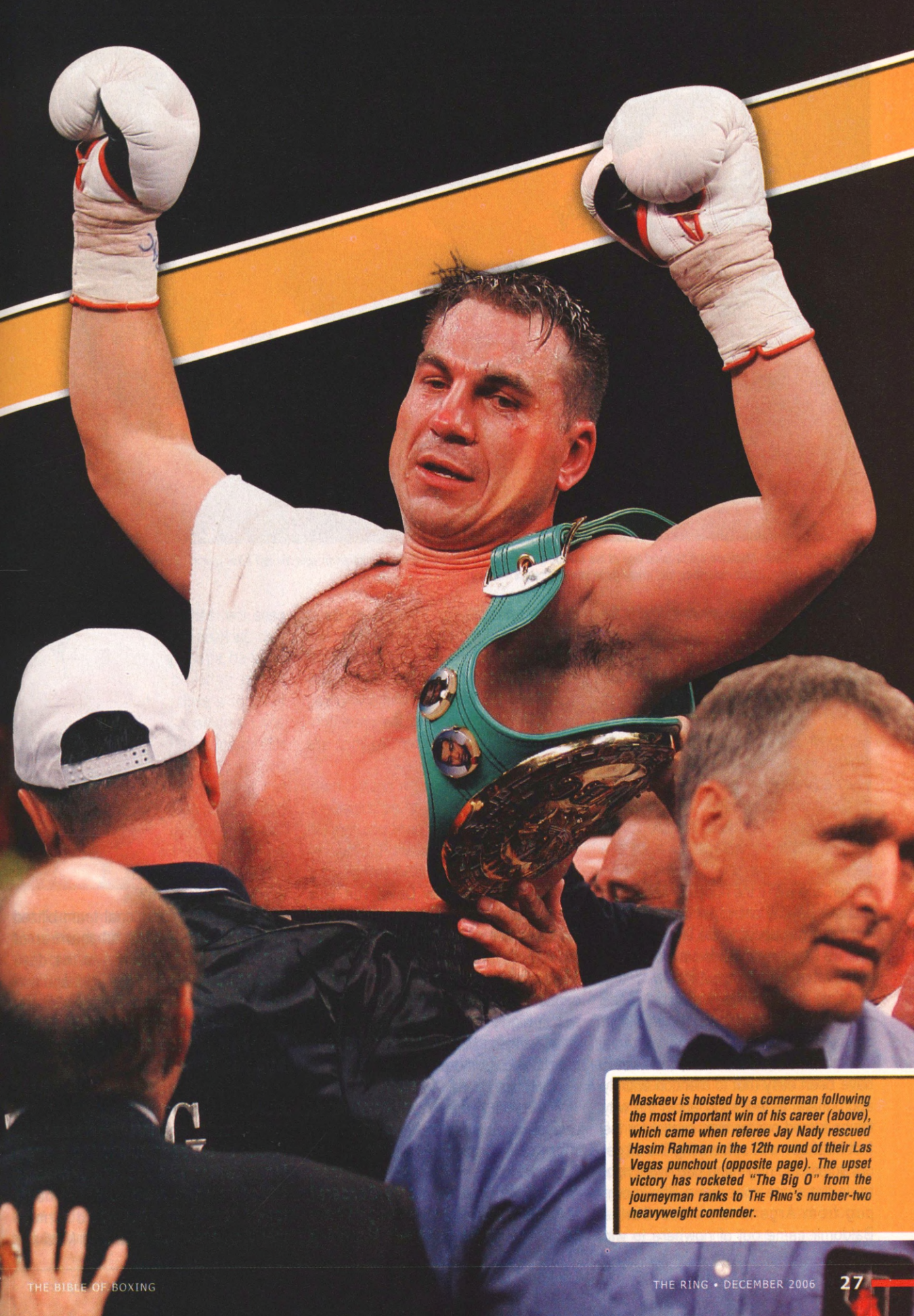
WHO WAS THAT MASKAEV MAN?

A New Life For Oleg At 37

By William Dettloff
PHOTOS BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

There was a moment, just seconds before Oleg Maskaev stopped Hasim Rahman in the 12th round in Las Vegas in August, when it looked as though Rahman might tumble through the ropes and fly right out of the ring again. It was almost surreal. Outside of a professional wrestling match, you probably can count on the fingers of one hand the number of times you've seen a heavyweight topple through the ropes (including Dempsey-Firpo). And here it was about to happen again to the same guy, at the hands of the very same opponent who did it the first time.





Maskaev is hoisted by a cornerman following the most important win of his career (above), which came when referee Jay Nady rescued Hasim Rahman in the 12th round of their Las Vegas punchout (opposite page). The upset victory has rocketed "The Big O" from the journeyman ranks to THE RING*'s number-two heavyweight contender.*

As is often the case, Maskaev made good use of his thudding right hand (above), but the big surprise was his left hook (right), a punch he's recently added to his repertoire and made good use of against Rahman.

That Rahman managed to finish the fight on the good side of the ropes, where Jay Nady called it off at 2:17 of the round, was little consolation. Gone was his high ranking—going in, THE RING rated him second, right behind Wladimir Klitschko—along with any of the cautious but hopeful regard he'd earned over 12 hot-and-cold years and nearly 50 pro fights.

Gone, too, at least for the time being, was any dream Rahman had been nursing of reclaiming the heavyweight title he'd won against Lennox Lewis years earlier, and with it the hopes of securing a monster payday or two, which is what all the fighting is about in the first place. It's true his hangers-on carried the WBC belt into the ring with him, but that was (and remains) a mere bargaining chip. No one recognized him as the true heavyweight champion.

Rahman is a likable sort, so it would have been easy (not to mention entirely appropriate) to feel sadly about the way things turned out for him, except for the fact Maskaev was celebrating like all get out across the ring—and had every right to. In the same year that a little-known pug from Argentina named Carlos Baldomir came out of nowhere to win the welterweight world title, beat one of the game's most popular fighters, and then hit the lottery with a fight against Floyd Mayweather, it is Maskaev's story that most resonates with those who see the fight game as one of the great contests of attrition and reward that are available in this life.

Maskaev's comeback is not the overstated and mostly fabricated comeback of, say, John Ruiz, whose supporters (all three of them) liked to claim Ruiz' ascension to the top of the WBA ratings after having his bell rung by David Tua, was the stuff of legends. On the other end of the scale, nor is Maskaev's comeback on par with, say, George Foreman's, whose 10-year absence from the ring and subsequent heavyweight trials culminated with a highly improbable knockout win over champion Michael Moorer and commercial endorsements aplenty.

But it's still a hell of a story.

After all, how many top heavyweights can you name that were knocked loopy in consecutive fights by Kirk Johnson and Goofi Whitaker, of all people, and then, three fights later, by Corey Sanders? How many top-rated heavyweights have had their longtime trainer—in Maskaev's case the respected Bob Jackson—believe so strongly in the fighter's need of a swift and permanent retirement that he dropped him like a dirty habit and refused to reconsider even as the fighter kept showing up every day at the gym?

Maskaev's promotional team blitzed the fight press with all manner of Cinderella Man verbiage in the days leading up to and after the fight, and normally we resist such a clichéd plot line. But Maskaev's long trek back to Las Vegas, to the top of the division, is a hard story to resist.

Prizefighters walk away from the ring for far less than any of what Maskaev went through, and three years ago you wouldn't have been able to find a single fan or writer who thought Jackson's advice harsh or premature. We never took a formal poll, but would surmise that the consensus regarding Maskaev was that he was for a short while a fairly heavy-handed but slow, plodding, athletically ordinary and ultimately emotionally fragile heavyweight, whose meager aspirations Johnson ruined when he knocked him out.

It is fortunate for all involved, save Rahman, that trainer Victor Valle Jr. did not count himself among that consensus. The son of the late Victor Valle, who trained, most famously, Gerry Cooney, Valle felt badly for Maskaev standing alone in a corner of the gym and offered to work with him on the hand pads for a couple of rounds. What he saw surprised him.

"Everyone had given up on him. I saw that he still had good reflexes and that he was sharp," Valle told THE RING. "He could move. I saw that he needed a lot of work, but right away he was a quick learner." Valle approached Jackson about Maskaev's status—no self-respecting trainer starts meaningful work with another trainer's fighter before doing so—and was pleased by the response. "Bob told me he was up for grabs," Valle said.

You know the rest of the story: An alliance formed between Valle, manager Ken Hesch, and promoter Dennis Rappaport (the Cooney connection. He had 10 wins over mostly nondescript competition before the WBC, for unknown and, let's face it, mysterious reasons, elevated Maskaev to its top position, forcing a mandatory defense by Rahman.

At the beginning, Valle set out to improve Maskaev's defense and round out his offense, which up to that point consisted primarily of a thudding right cross, the kind which had catapulted Rahman through the ropes in their first slugfest. Ultimately, the fighter who upended Rahman despite the 2-1 odds against him was a fighter technically superior to the one whom had accomplished the same thing seven years

It was not a one-sided fight, and Rahman scored well from time to time, especially with his punishing left jab. At one point, Maskaev looked like he wanted to give up, but his conditioning, improved technique, and pep talk from his trainer all helped to keep the transplanted Russian going.

earlier, and he needed to be. No one would say he was better athletically than was Rahman the first time, and certainly, at the age of 37, he wouldn't be this time, either. It turned out he didn't have to be.

"He looked like the better schooled fighter in there," said HBO's Larry Merchant. "Give high marks to the trainer, who said before the fight that he believed you can teach an old dog new tricks. I think that Maskaev's left hooks were the big difference in the fight. That's always been the knock on European fighters, that they're straight up and very few of them throw meaningful left hooks, but rely on the one-two."

Indeed, Rahman, 41-6-2 (31), looked wholly unprepared for Maskaev's left hook, and why wouldn't he be? As far as he knew, as far as any of us knew, Maskaev had only the right cross. (Such is one of the benefits of working in near anonymity, as Maskaev was; you can keep your improvements a secret).

But Maskaev, 33-5 (26), started landing hard left hooks as early as the second round and they continued to find the mark whenever he remembered to throw them. He did rely much of the time on an occasionally stiff jab and that old, heavy right hand, but almost as often as not, a snappy left hook followed the one-two. The heretofore unseen left hooks and an earnest body attack are evidence of Valle's contribution to the cause and so too was the strategy that Maskaev, at times, labored to employ.

"I learned from my father to watch fighters very closely, to watch tapes of them and study them," Valle said. "And I picked up with Rahman that he has a certain rhythm he gets into that shows when he's going to throw punches. I studied him very closely and knew what our strategy had to be. We had to keep him in the middle of the ring, move to the right, away from his powerpunches, and block or slip his jabs. And Oleg had to jab, jab, right-hand, left-hook to keep him off."

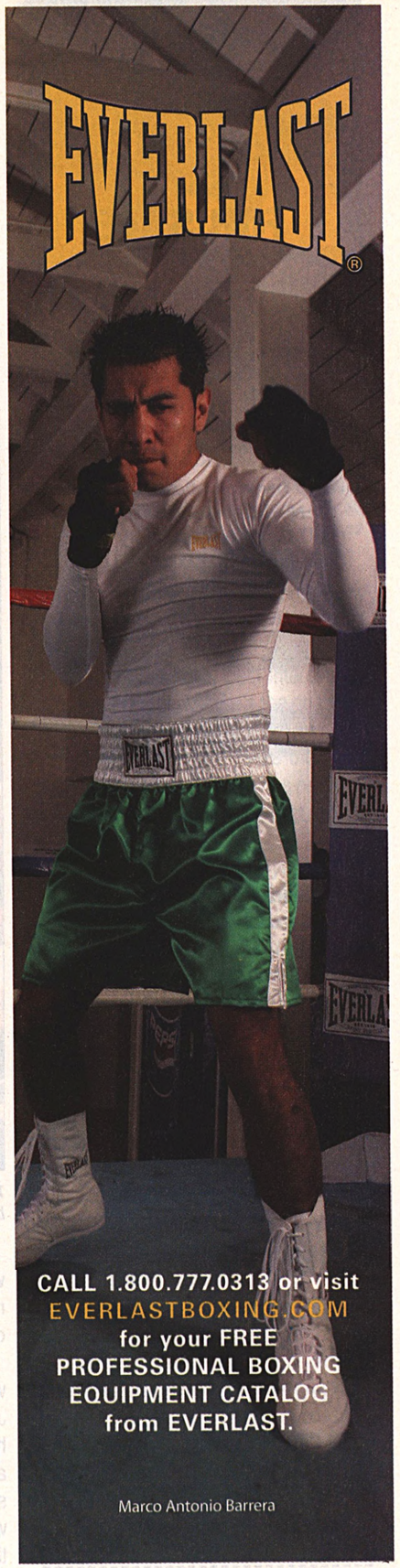
Valle, an emotional and religious man who said he carried a picture of his father into the arena with him, concedes it wasn't an easy fight and there came a point in the middle rounds when he had to work hard between rounds to keep Maskaev in the fight.

"It looked like he wanted to give up," Valle said. "I had to talk to him in the corner. I told him, 'Don't give up, it's close. It's not just a fight between you and Rahman, it's a spiritual fight, a fight that can make you or break you.' At the same time, he wasn't really feeling the punches the way he did in their fight in '99, when Rahman really hurt him."

Adding to Maskaev's difficulty was a back injury he revealed to Merchant during the postfight interview. Valle said it occurred in June, as Maskaev was moving furniture into his new home in Sacramento, California. "I had to be very tough on him in the gym, very strict, because the back was killing him," said Valle. "He was in denial. No matter how much it hurt, he kept saying it was all right, but I could see it wasn't. So we had to adapt, and Oleg was able to do it."

That he did. Maskaev appeared to catch his second wind around the ninth round, and in the 11th, he shook Rahman with a hook. Rahman sagged when Maskaev caught him with a hook and a right with two minutes left in the 12th, and a hard straight left-right sent him down. Maskaev could have eased off the gas there and taken his chances with the judges, but chose not to. "If I have to win this title, I have to fight," he said afterward.

Maskaev finished Rahman off with a series of clubbing blows that weren't pretty but got the job done, and forgive Rahman's later assertions that he'd been hit on the break; getting punched silly



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Timber! Rahman crumbles under Maskaev's final-round onslaught. It was an exciting finish to what had been a highly entertaining heavyweight fight, which was exactly what the maligned division needed.

when you're in an exhausted state will make you imagine things that never occurred.

The grit Maskaev showed was noteworthy in light of his collapses against Johnson and especially Whitaker, where he hardly put up a fight before collapsing at Goofi's feet. This was a back-and-forth slugfest, much like their first fight, and it was reflected in the judges' scores at the time of the stoppage: 106-103 and 105-104 for Maskaev, and 106-103 for Rahman. It was no easy fight for either guy and Maskaev's mettle prevailed. "In both fights, Maskaev was tougher than Rahman," said Merchant.

The question is what comes next for Maskaev, and despite Valle's assertions that because of the back injury we only saw "about 20 percent of what Maskaev can do," it's somewhat difficult to envision a long stay around the top of the division.

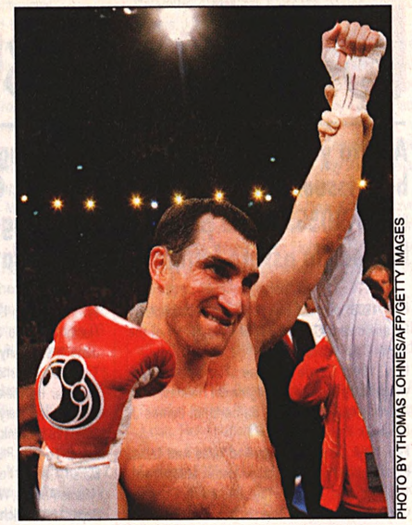

PHOTO BY THOMAS LOHNES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Is a match between THE RING's number-one contender Wladimir Klitschko, pictured after his April knockout of Chris Byrd, and second-ranked Maskaev coming up?

"The question is if he can come back in three months and whether they can strike a deal," Merchant offered. "If he can, it's in [Maskaev's] best interests to fight Klitschko, because he's the one who will generate the most money and you would think that at 37 years old, that would be his priority. No one has presented an idea that I've heard that would make him more money."

By the time you read this, you'll know if that fight was made and even if it wasn't. There were other possibilities, among them a match against the giant Nicolay Valuev, should Valuev get past Monte Barrett in Chicago. That would seem right up the alley of Rappaport, who, should you recall his days with Cooney, has no great dislike for the gaudy. The possibility exists too that Maskaev's team might go for an easy one out of the box, but let's be forthright: They might have to explore the very bowels of the division to find a gimme for Maskaev, whose liabilities we already know.

No, the best idea is for them to grit their teeth, go right to the top, and hope for the best. After all, even Jimmy Braddock, a Cinderella Man from another era, didn't record a single successful title defense. That doesn't lessen what he accomplished, nor will a quick descent down the ranks detract from all Maskaev conquered on his way back to Las Vegas. ■

Maskaev is, after all, 37 years old and still suffers the maladies that handicapped him when he was young: slowness of hand and foot, a suspect chin, shaky confidence. And the question will be asked, probably rightly so, whether his comeback would have occurred at all in a better, deeper heavyweight division. But then, it's no more a better, deeper division now than it was when his comeback started, even if, as one assumes, he'll be facing its best fighters.

As we went to press, there had been no announcement regarding Maskaev's immediate plans, though as Hesch reminded THE RING, the WBC already had mandated that he face the winner of the James Toney-Samuel Peter fight. But there are far more interesting and lucrative fights out there, such as the one Merchant suggested during the postfight interview: a pairing with Klitschko in November. Not only would such a match be attractive to HBO because it would unify two of the belts currently floating around, it would also result in something far more significant: a heavyweight champion with THE RING belt around his waist.

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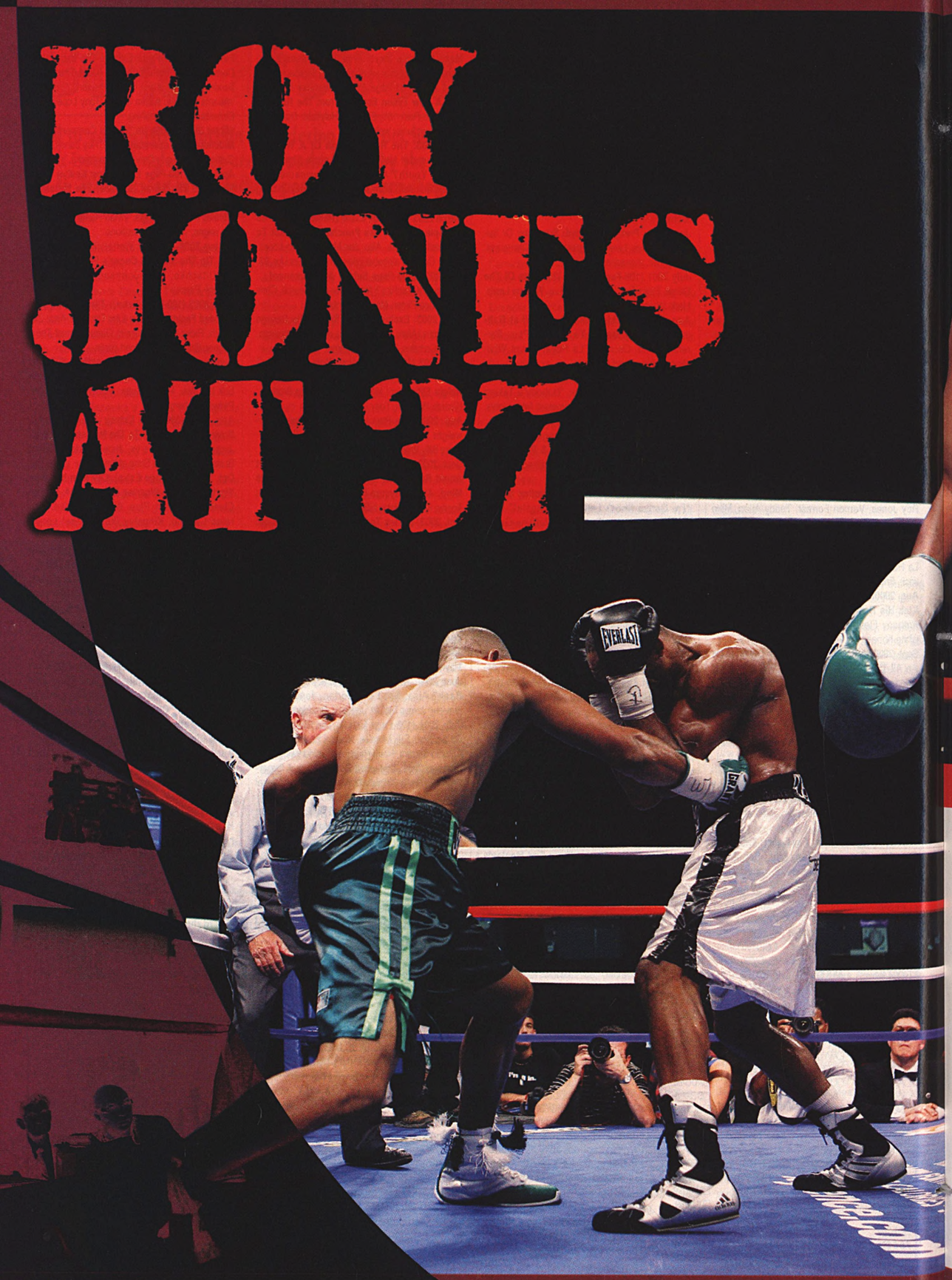
ROY JONES AT 37



Jones is smiling again (left) thanks to his one-sided decision over Prince Badi Ajamu in Boise, Idaho. Jones recorded his first win in his four most recent fights by shutting down his obscure rival's offense and pounding his body round after round (opposite page).

Is He Any More Than An Illusion?

By Don Stradley
PHOTOS BY SCOTT FOSTER

Between his country-fried hip-hop slang, God talk, and arcane rooster references, Roy Jones has always been a hard one to comprehend. In 2002, however, on an episode of ESPN's *The Last Word*, Jones may have inadvertently revealed something about himself while discussing his beloved bantams.

Ajamu got off to a promising start when he jumped on Jones at the beginning of the first round and forced him into the ropes. But after taking a series of shots from his opponent, Jones stayed out of trouble for the remainder of the fight.

"I'm not going to breed them to fight anymore," Jones said. "I'll just be raising them for show. They're beautiful birds." Host Jim Rome was incredulous; Jones was serious. "They are beautiful animals," he said.

This was long before Antonio Tarver and Glen Johnson punched Jones' image full of holes. He was in a rut, cruising to dull wins over unknown opponents, trying to make his name as a hip-hop artist. By retiring his birds, he was telling us something. Roy Jones' identity was no longer wrapped up in fighting.

We never imagined Jones would still be doing it at age 37. Yet there he was in July, his face slightly haggard with age, testing his old moves in a more than half-empty arena in Boise, Idaho. His opponent, Prince Badi Ajamu, was game, but a bit star struck. After winning a routine unanimous decision, Jones said he'd need only another two or three months to get back to his old form. He even joked about taking on the gigantic Nicolay Valuev.

Jones has never had the crossover appeal of an Oscar De La Hoya, but his fans are devoted and even protective of him. The rest of us wanted Jones to gut his opponents like hogs, but his fans were content to watch him coast and shake his ass a little. Even during the era of "Reluctant Roy" and the "Roycott," Jones' audience remained loyal. Predictably, they wasted no time lighting up Internet message boards after he beat Ajamu. The messages all had the same tone: He's back, he's focused, and he's still the man.

In an unforeseen twist, the next day's headlines were downright splashy. A few shrieked "Jones Wins 50th!" as if it was the same as Tiger Woods winning his 50th PGA tour title. Surprisingly, positive stories (that is, from the papers that bothered to cover the fight) were the order of the day. Jones' hometown rag, *The Pensacola News Journal*, was the most upbeat. "Jones proved he can win any fight he wants," wrote one columnist. Another wrote, "Hopefully, his victory against Prince Badi Ajamu on Saturday night can start his climb back to the top of the boxing world." Savvy writers saw the fight for what it was, something akin to Tyson's last gasp win over Cliff Etienne, but not many were bashing Jones outright, a surprise since he's never been a beat writer's best pal.

Even Internet reporters fell in line with the good vibes. From secondsout.com: "Jones would pick his shots as Ajamu came forward. His right and left uppercuts were impressive at times and Ajamu's right eye was considerably swollen by round 11. In the final stanza, Jones was at his cocky best." From doghouseboxing.com: "The real Roy Jones Jr. showed up and treated fans to his old ways of looking pretty and dominating the rounds." From eastsideboxing.com: "Roy's performance was one that will have surprised quite a few experts."

Well, we're not sure about that. The most Jones did was prove he doesn't belong in a museum. But we know where the good reviews are coming from.

A fighter's return from a major defeat is one of the most moving moments in sports. And after taking a few beatings, Jones seems more human. People who weren't admirers in the past may actually have felt sorry for him. There's no penance like back-to-back knockout losses, especially for a cocky guy like Jones. Also, for the first time in his career, Jones is perceived as an underdog. All of these factors could be adding up to a gooey, multi-calorie slice of old-fashioned sports fan sentiment.

For fans who didn't come to boxing until 1995 or so, Jones was their de facto Sugar Ray Robinson. Older fans knew better—there wasn't enough alcohol in America to make Vinny Paz look like Jake LaMotta—but the Gen X, hip-hop loving, Kangol hat crowd were always down with Jones. And he'll get the Robinson comparison stirring again if he can come all the way back and defeat a name fighter. The formula certainly worked for Bernard Hopkins.

When Hopkins defeated a sleepwalking Antonio Tarver last June, he did more than win THE RING's light heavyweight championship. The win practically erased his two losses to Jermain Taylor. Any good middleweight could have beaten Tarver that night, but Hopkins is getting the best press of his life, just because he's 41 and was thought to be done. B-Hop's new glory isn't lost on Jones. Junior has achieved just about everything a champion can achieve, except the momentous come-

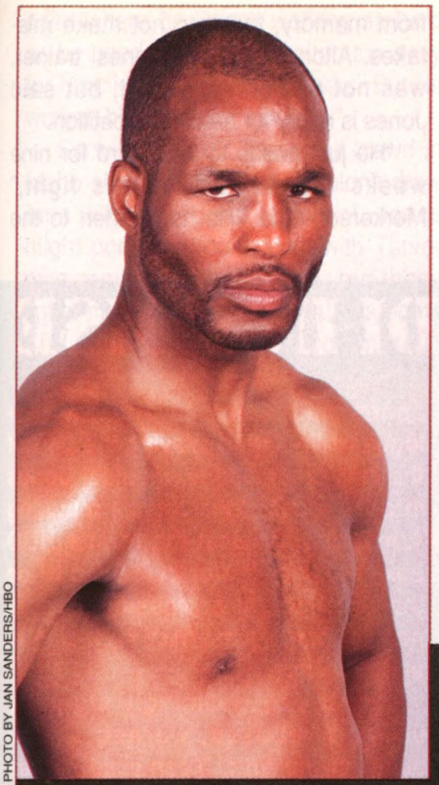


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

Tantalizing possibility: Could Bernard Hopkins be persuaded to fight again if Jones were the opponent? Beating B-Hop would certainly go a long way toward erasing the bitter memory of Jones' kayo losses to Antonio Tarver and Glen Johnson, both of who were beaten by "The Executioner."

back, the one that leaves everyone saying, "How could we have doubted him?"

What makes Jones' return slightly different is that he's not in debt. He's not being forced to fight by promoters—his only significant pay-per-view show was the John Ruiz bout that scored approximately 500,000 buyers, so he's never been a real cash cow for anybody. And he's not yet at the level of Evander Holyfield, pathetically campaigning for a boxing license. What he does have in common with Holyfield, however, is a religious conviction that could keep him in the ring longer than common sense would allow.

"People have to realize that my career started on a down," Jones said prior to fighting Ajamu. "I got ripped off of a gold medal at the Olympics. It didn't stop me and it made me a better person. So anytime God sends me through a down time, He is only trying to make me a better person. So now I am happy. You see me train. You see me enjoy myself. You see me smile. Why? Because He sent me through downs for a reason, because he wants to see me happy again. But if He keeps me down, that's what He has planned for the champ."

Another reason Jones keeps fighting is because, for better or worse, he's always done things his way. At various times he has told the press, his dad, HBO, and even boxing fans to stuff it. So now he will tell Father Time and Mother Nature to stuff it. But what he has left is a real concern.

When Sugar Ray Robinson was Jones' age, he regained the middleweight crown with a one-punch knockout of iron-jawed Gene Fullmer. Jones gave no indication against Ajamu that he is capable of anything remotely similar.

"I don't think Roy is regaining his form," said writer Thomas Hauser, a longtime Jones watcher. "He's still a good fighter, and there are lots of guys he can beat. But the young Roy Jones would win 10 of 12 rounds against the current R.J."

Judging by the Idaho fight, Jones is still banking on his signature style of counterpunching, killing time by keeping his distance, and showboating. His punches lacked venom, but they were accurate. Still, he seemed like a retired entertainer performing an old routine from memory, trying to not make mistakes. Alton Merkerson, Jones' trainer, was not overly impressed, but said Jones is ready for better competition.

"He just needs to train hard for nine weeks like he did for this fight," Merkerson said. "He had gotten to the point where he wasn't working as hard as he needed to. It had gotten too easy for him. He was cutting corners. But he worked his tail off for this fight."

So who is next? The small crowd in Idaho showed that Jones couldn't draw fans without a good opponent. Jones might ponder a fourth bout with Tarver or a rematch with Johnson, but those fights might not even draw at this point. The fight with the most commercial potential might be a rematch with a certain ex-inmate of Graterford State Penitentiary.

Hopkins and Jones have a unique rivalry because it actually heated up *after* they fought. Their initial bout, won by Jones, was a dullish 12-rounder fought in 1993 for the vacant IBF middleweight title. By 2002, both fighters were huge stars that could have met for a serious payday. Instead, Jones fought Glenn Kelly, a part-time garbage collector, and an overmatched Clinton Woods.

The fact that Hopkins has wins over both Tarver and Johnson must bother Jones. Just a few years ago, we thought this era would be remembered as Jones' time, but now we're more likely to look back at it as the Hopkins era. A convincing win over Hopkins, however, would make a lot of people forget the image of Jones being knocked cold. As for Hopkins being retired, well, don't believe it. If the money is there, Hopkins will be too.

Rahman bout is highly unlikely.

Ajamu, 25-3-1 (14), Camden, New Jersey, explained he had problems with stomach pain and breathing. "I hyperventilated in the first round and could not calm down."

Television: Integrated & CSI PPV

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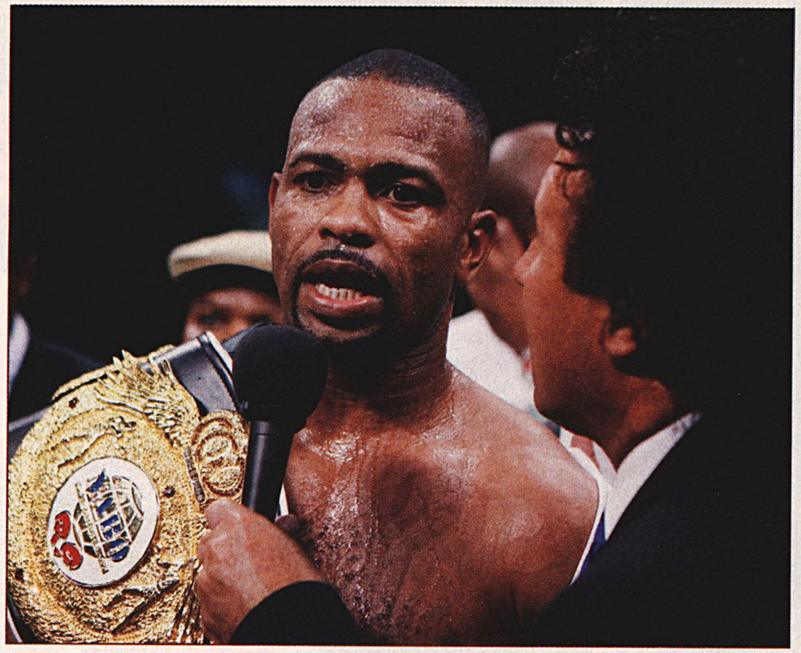
(7-29-06)

Oliver W. Tuthill Jr.



Jones spoke of fighting heavyweights again in the immediate aftermath of his victory over Ajamu, but, as of press time, no future bouts had been announced.

Of course, Hopkins-Jones II could turn out to be two geezers carefully sparring for one last monster paycheck. That is, if the egocentric pair can make it past the negotiating table. Still, just talking about it is a minor victory for Jones. More than one award-winning boxing writer actually feared for Jones' life prior to his rubber match with Tarver. Jones has gone from his figurative deathbed to a potential money fight. Of course, just because we want to see it doesn't mean it will happen. Jones has never concerned himself with what anyone else wanted.

Jones was so superb during his prime that we sometimes went a little crazy with our expectations. He was a blown-up middleweight, and we were hoping he'd fight heavyweights. It all seems irrational now, but it actually angered us that Jones might complete his career without facing a real challenge. His challenge is finally here, only it's not a fighter; it's his own aging body. It's a strange development for a man who never hid his uneasy feeling for boxing. "You've seen the way most fighters end up," he said in 1998. "This game don't usually deal you a good hand."

At the same age Jones is, Ray Robinson iced Gene Fullmer with a perfect punch, and split a pair with Carmen Basilio. That's legend-making stuff. We don't think Jones has it in him. But like distant relatives who finally show a family resemblance in their old age, Jones seems more like Robinson lately.

Like Jones, Robinson was openly disdainful of boxing. A half-century before Jones recorded his CDs, Robinson was singing and dancing on television shows, trying to be more than just a brute that fought for a living. Still, long after his prime, he hopscotched across America and Europe, fighting clubfighters for small purses. "Mine is a biblical story," said Robinson in 1960. "It's a biblical story because every move I make is motivated by God."

Sounds familiar. But whether Jones fights on because of God, money, ego, or to erase the embarrassment of three consecutive losses, every bout will be a high wire act. If he slips to the hard ground below, supportive fans and a nostalgic press will not be enough to cushion the fall. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to this magazine.

JONES BAMBOOZLES BADI IN BOISE

They came to bury Caesar, not to praise him, but expectations of the funeral were premature, as former undisputed light heavyweight champion Roy Jones rope-a-doped the bewildered Prince Badi Ajamu and toyed with him all night. To the delight of the crowd, Jones dominated, preened, smiled, and showed that the old fighter can still strut his stuff as he methodically picked apart his opponent—at least an opponent at Ajamu's level.

Jones, 175, encountered problems in the first round as Ajamu, 174½, came out swinging and sent Jones into the ropes. An audible gasp went through the crowd of approximately 2,500 at the Qwest Arena as Ajamu pummeled him. Jones sagged, his head buried in his gloves as he teetered and rocked. But by the end of the round, Jones was in command, moving laterally around the ring and taking over control for the rest of the night with powerful bodyshots and superior ring generalship.

In the third round, referee Jerry Armstrong warned Jones for his defensive posture, and Jones responded by stepping up his attack. Later in the round, Armstrong admonished Ajamu for unsportsmanlike conduct after the frustrated fighter repeatedly pushed, shoved, and bullied Jones into the ropes.

A pattern was discernible by the fourth round, as Armstrong and Jones maintained an ongoing dialogue while Ajamu, playing the part of the bull, continued to shoulder Jones into the ropes. Jones began rebuking Armstrong for what the former HBO boxing commentator perceived to be the ref's lack of professionalism in not stopping Ajamu from engaging in unruly tactics.

Armstrong, seemingly stung by Jones's rebukes, warned Ajamu again in the fifth. Meanwhile, Jones landed powerful bodyshots that the muscular Ajamu absorbed without going down.

In the sixth, Armstrong again warned Ajamu, and Jones began to smile and mug for the audience as he lay against the ropes. Jones would then move off the ropes and punish his foe with additional bodypunches.

The seventh was a huge round for Jones because Armstrong deducted two points from Ajamu for low blows. Jones also opened a nasty gash over his adversary's right eye with a left.

The 12th round was a synopsis of the whole fight with Jones flaunting his superiority in every category. Ajamu showed a brave heart, but was totally outclassed.

All three judges, George Laiarus, Lynne Carter, and Levi Marinez, scored it 119-106 in Jones' favor.

Afterward, an exuberant Jones, 50-4 (38), indicated he wanted to fight then-WBC heavyweight titleholder Hasim Rahman because, "I see something I like about Rahman." When asked about fighting current WBA titlist Nicolay Valuev, Jones said, "I'll fight him too."

Now that Rahman has been stopped by Oleg Maskaev, a Jones-

Ajamu had no defense for Jones' bodyshots

When he beat Zab Judah to win the welterweight title, a lot of people thought Carlos Baldomir was a one-hit wonder. But his subsequent knockout of Arturo Gatti (right) in his first defense has suggested that "Tata" is a worthy successor to all the outstanding Argentinean fighters before him.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

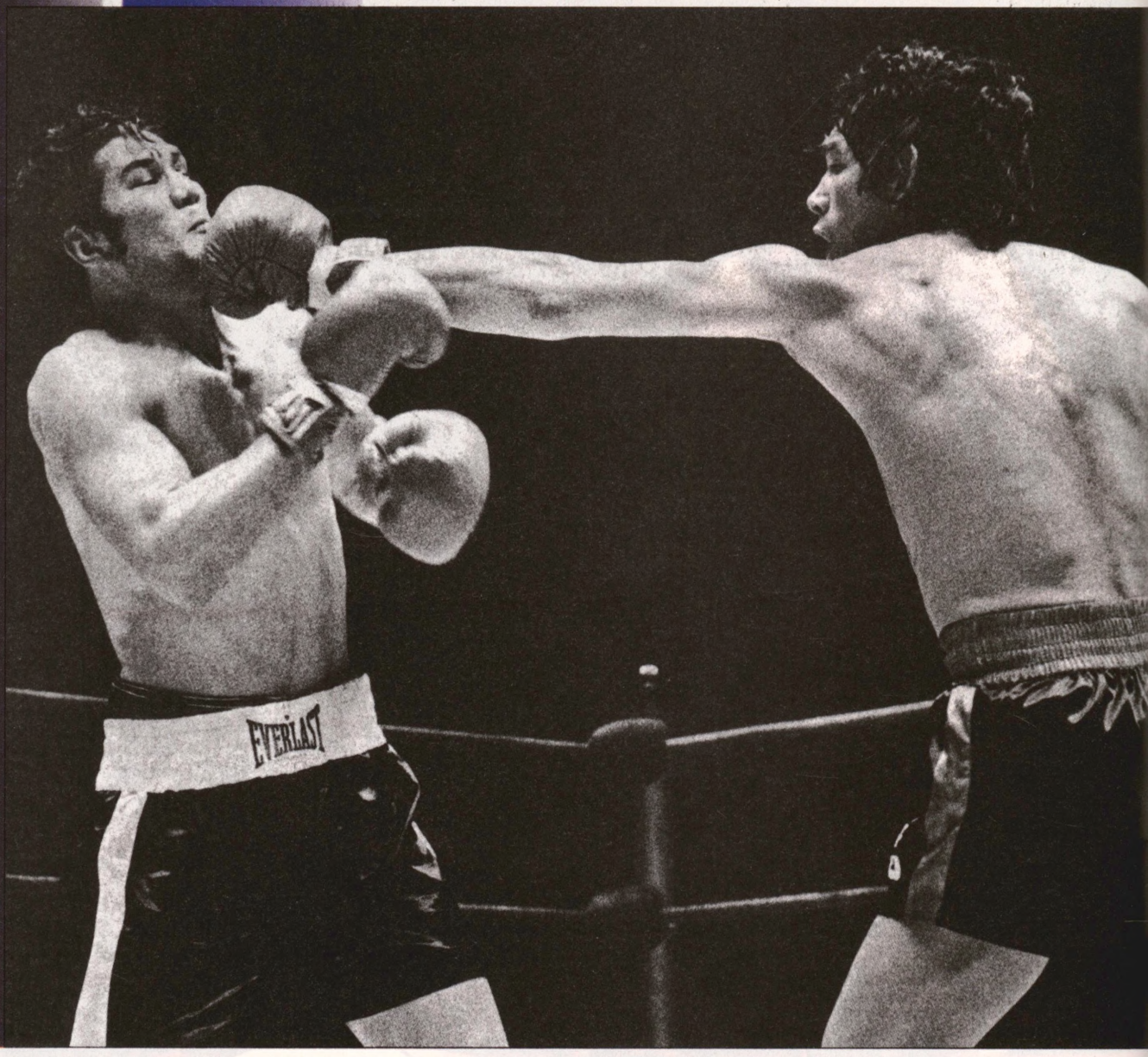
Carlos Baldomir Follows A Long-Standing Argentinean Tradition

By Gavin Evans

There's a fine tradition in Argentinean boxing—along the lines of "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." But it comes with the double rider: "If you eventually score, keep going—and make sure you do it abroad."

Carlos Baldomir, billed as boxing's contemporary Cinderella Man, epitomizes this approach. For 13 years, he seemed to be going nowhere in particular. Fighting mainly in Buenos Aires, he picked up nine losses and six draws (they like draws in Argentina) in his first 56 bouts and never beat anyone particularly spicy. His best results were a draw with Dingaan Thobela and a disqualification win against Joshua

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN



Carlos Monzon, considered by many to be Argentina's greatest fighter, knocks back Tony Licata's head with a left jab en route to a 10th-round knockout in defense of the middleweight title in 1975 at Madison Square Garden. It was Monzon's only bout in the United States.

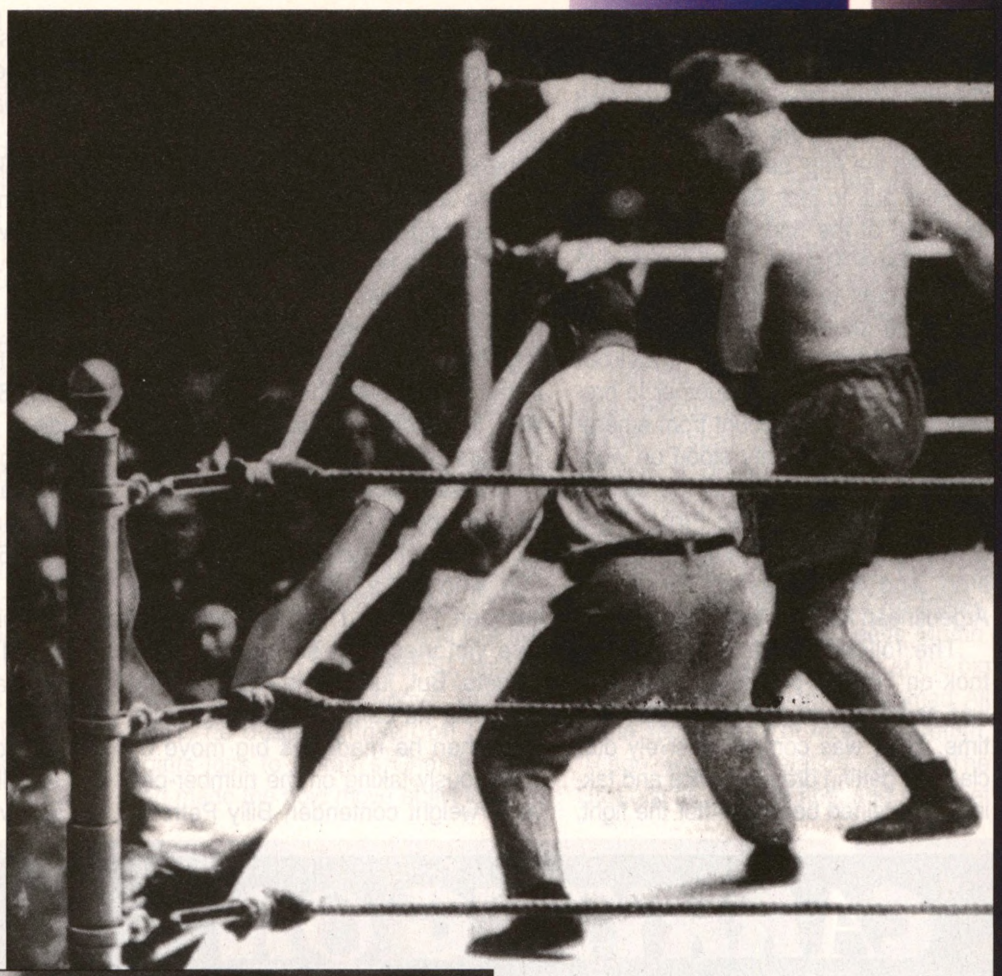
Clottey, when he was trailing on points.

So, when Baldomir finally arrived, by outlasting Zab Judah to lift the world welterweight title, we all thought, well, he'd lucked out by finding Mr. Bling-Bling on one of his off-nights. But now, after outboxing, out-punching, and out-muscling Arturo Gatti, there's reason to wonder: Is little "Pretty Boy" Floyd Mayweather really such a sure thing when he faces this Argentinean strong-man on November 4 in Las Vegas?

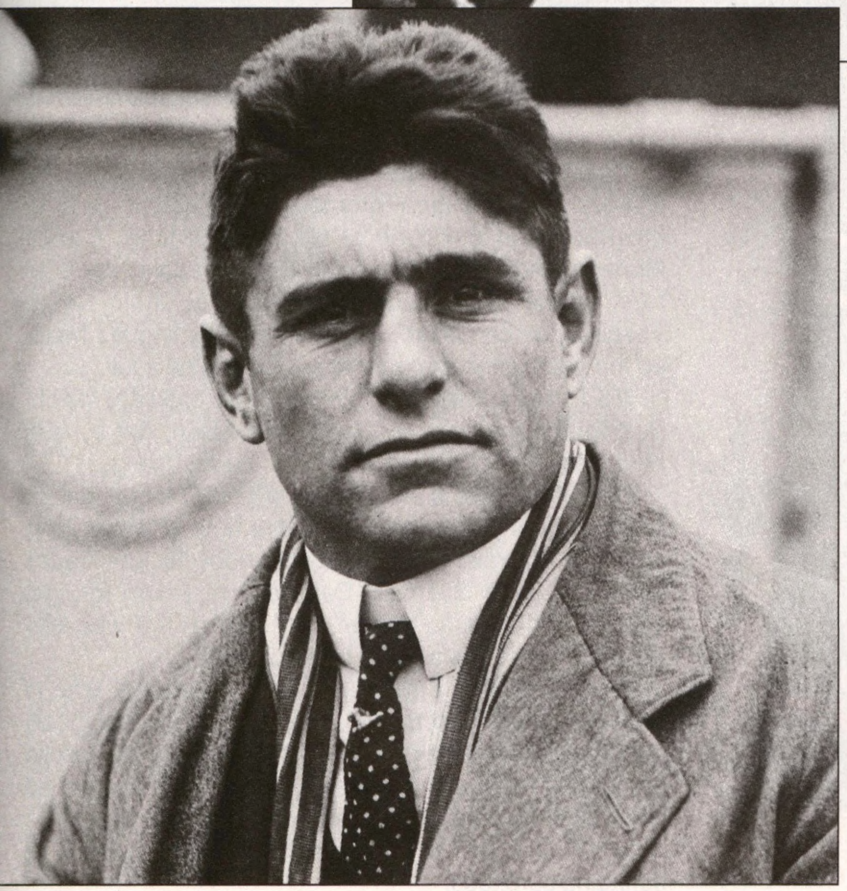
The Argentine tradition of long, home-based apprenticeships for their leading boxers is understandable when you consider the level of support in the major centers, along with the certainty that any imported opponents will have to win every round to have any hope of securing a draw. Less easily explicable is why so many of these local heroes suddenly exceed expectations after winning their first title bout.

This conundrum is most aptly represented by the man many regard as the greatest Argentinean boxer of them all, Carlos Monzon. The drinking, smoking, wild-living, woman-battering middleweight hardly lived the life of a monk outside of training camp, and for the first half of his career his form in the ring was unspectacular. During eight comparatively uneventful fighting years, he never once ventured abroad, lost three and drew nine (and one of those draws was a hometown robbery in his favor against Bennie Briscoe), so Monzon was a clear underdog when he challenged Nino Benvenuti for the world title in 1970 in Rome.

Monzon, 87-3-9 (59), used his long, booming, pinpoint right to stop the slick Italian in the 12th round, and from then on ruled supreme, defending the world title 14 times, all over the world, during a seven-year spell. Three challengers gave him decent arguments (Emile Griffith, Rodrigo Valdes, and Briscoe), but his reign was never in serious danger, and when he retired at the age of 35, his place among his division's all-



The first boxer from Argentina to make an impact on the international scene was Luis Angel Firpo (below), whose big moment came when he knocked heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey out of the ring during their 1923 bout at New York City's Polo Grounds (right). Unfortunately for the "Wild Bull Of The Pampas," Dempsey climbed back in the ring and kayoed Firpo in the second round.



time top-10 was beyond dispute.

But it has to be said that there's also another, sadder tradition in Argentinean professional boxing: The long line of men who come within a whisker of winning the big one only to fade rapidly after failing. In fact, it's a tradition that goes right back to the country's professional fighting roots.

The story starts with a raw but cannily ambitious novice, Luis Angel Firpo, who had little else going for him other than his size (6'2", 216 pounds) when he arrived in the United States in 1922. This was just fine for promoter Tex Rickard, who had brought him to the U.S. to serve as a fall guy for Jack Dempsey. For most of the first round of their savage fight at the Polo Grounds in New York in 1923, Firpo played his designated role to perfection.

Dempsey took a knee from a big right while tearing into this slow, clumsy patsy, but along the way, dropped the big man seven times. But the "Wild

Bull Of The Pampas" kept swinging, and one of his haymakers sent Dempsey flying through the ropes. Had the ringside media not pushed him back into the ring, he would have been counted out. In fact, he may well have been out of the ring for over 10 seconds. Gene Tunney later claimed to have spoken to the editor of the fight film, who insisted that Rickard had instructed him to cut the knockout sequence and splice it together to prevent proof of a long count from emerging. Anyway, Dempsey stood on wobbly legs, but survived until the bell. In round two, he dropped Firpo, 32-6 (27), three more times in quick succession, and on the last of these, the Argentinean failed to beat the count.

The following year the Wild Bull took on 35-year-old Harry Wills, who was several years past his prime. This time, Firpo was comprehensively outclassed, getting dropped twice and taking a sustained beating. After the fight, he faced deportation on charges of bringing a female manicurist into America "for immoral purposes" and committing perjury on his immigration papers. He retired, but came back a decade later, only to be stopped by his Chilean neighbor, Arturo Godoy.

Yet despite his failures and the rather stark limits to his natural talent, Firpo was immensely popular at home, inspiring unprecedented public interest in the sport, even though, for a long time, the tradition of decline after heroic failure prevailed.

A case in point was the career of a far better boxer than Firpo, the mercurial lightweight Justo Suarez, 24-2-1 (13), who had a brilliant unbeaten run between 1928 and '31, including decisive victories over several top contenders. But, just as he was reaching his peak, he contracted tuberculosis, and when he made his big move by audaciously taking on the number-one welterweight contender, Billy Petrolle, he was stopped in nine and was never the same again. After another knockout defeat, Suarez retired six months later.

It took more than 20 years before an Argentinean fighter broke the mold, by showing that when his country's fighters win world titles, they don't let go. The man for the job was the tiny Pascual Perez, "El León Mendocino," who first made his name by winning the 1948 Olympic gold medal to conclude a stellar amateur career. Like most Argentinean professionals, he did all his early fighting at home; the difference being that he won them all—until July 1954 when Perez, 84-7-1 (57), stepped up in class to take on world champion Yoshio Shirai in a non-title fight and escaped with a Buenos Aires draw. Standing 4'11" and weighing 108 pounds, it looked like this big-hitting 28-year-old might be too small and old for the elite.

But with Perez, appearances were deceptive, because after that setback he had no hesitation in traveling to Japan to outpoint Shirai for the title. He went on to become one of the finest flyweights of them all, defending nine times in a 5½-year globetrotting reign. He seemed to have reached the end after a couple of losses to Thailand's Pone Kingpetch in 1960, but he rebounded, winning his next 28 in a row, finally retiring at the age of 38, having confirmed his reputation as one of the finest flyweights of all-time.

Defensive wizard Nicolino Locche had an even longer home-based gestation, and only secured his first title shot after 105 bouts (two losses, 14 draws), all but one of them in Argentina (and that one was around the corner, in Uruguay). Finally, in December 1968, he took his chances by flying to Japan where Locche, 117-4-14 (14), outclassed Takeshi Fuji for the WBA junior welterweight title. From then on, he put his genius on wider display with five defenses over the next 3½ years. He finally retired at the age of 37 in 1976 after his 136th bout.

A variation on this theme can be seen in the slow-start, big-finish career of the powerful, aggressive Victor Galindez, 55-9-4 (34). In 1974, after 43 fights (six losses, four draws), he won the WBA light heavyweight title. Having never before ventured beyond his country's borders, he decided it was time to make good use of his passport, plying his trade in Europe, Africa, and America during two impressively productive title reigns (12 title bout wins).

A fighter in the Galindez tradition—and, in a sense, Perez' successor among his country's little men—was the robust 5'1" Santos Laciar, who lost five and drew seven of his first 50, fighting almost exclusively at home. Then, in 1981, he dusted himself off from a points loss to Britain's Charlie Magri and made the bold move of flying off to Soweto, South Africa, where his career took an unexpected turn. Laciar, 79-10-11 (30), battered the WBA flyweight title from the hands of local hero Peter Mathebula, and from then on his form was astonishing. Over the next nine years, Laciar fought all over the world, enjoying two WBA flyweight reigns (11 title bout victories) and a spell as WBC super flyweight titleholder, finally retiring after his 101st bout.

But the other tradition—of decline after heroic failure—has also flourished. Oscar Bonavena, another smokin' 'n' drinkin' Argentinean brawler, dropped Joe Frazier twice and had him almost out, but ended up losing a split decision. He also later beat the likes of George Chuvalo, Zora Folley, Karl Mildenburger, and Leotis Martin. Bonavena finally got his shot at the big time when he took on Muhammad Ali in the second fight of Ali's 1970 return. "Ringo" was a revelation, driving The Greatest all over the ring, and an upset

CARRYING ON A TRADITION

PHOTO BY ROBERT LABERGE/GETTY IMAGES

Barrios celebrates his one-round kayo of Janos Nagy

The heyday of Argentinean boxing came when the Buenos Aires manager-promoter Tito Lectoure was at the helm and the likes of Nicolino Locche, Carlos Monzon, Victor Galindez, and Santos Laciar came to fore. In the 1990s, Juan Marin Coggi, Julio Cesar Vasquez, Jorge Castro, and Marcelo Dominguez headed the pack, after which there seemed to be a lull.

No longer, however. Within the current pack, Baldomir is the only real world champion, but several have earned their places within THE RING's ratings.

One of the best is the 30-year-old WBO super feather beltholder Jorge Barrios, who at the time of writing was rounding off training for his September 16 Las Vegas date with Joan Guzman. Barrios won seven straight after his final-round defeat in his 12-round war with Acelino Freitas (his second loss out of 50).

Alongside him is flyweight Omar Narvaez, who is unbeaten in 24 (two draws). This 31-year-old southpaw twice represented his country in the Olympics, so despite his lack of professional experience, he's a well-rounded boxer as well as being a decent puncher (15 stoppages).

Below this pair are several contenders capable of springing surprises.

Twenty-five-year-old light heavyweight Hugo Garay twice failed to unseat Zsolt Erdei for the WBO belt last year (first losing a German majority decision; then a split decision)—his only setbacks in 28 outings (13 stoppages). He was set to get another chance on September 18 when he was to have challenged Fabrice Tiozzo for the WBA belt.

Six-foot middleweight Mariano Carrera challenges Javier Castillejo for the WBO belt in Hamburg on November 18—his first venture abroad after 33 fights (29 wins). The 26-year-old Carrera has shown signs of improvement over the last year and has a chance against the 38-year-old Spaniard.

The only man to beat slick, quick Sergio Martinez was Antonio Margarito and in the 6½ years since, the 5'11" southpaw has won 20 straight. He's prepared to travel and has some decent scalps on his record, but at the age of 31 has yet to make his move.

Best of the prospects include 23-year-old, 16-0 (15), welterweight Marcos "El Chino" Maidana; 23-year-old, 14-0 (13), light welterweight Lucas Matthysse; and 25-year-old 22-1 (14) super flyweight Julio Roque Ler.

—G.E.

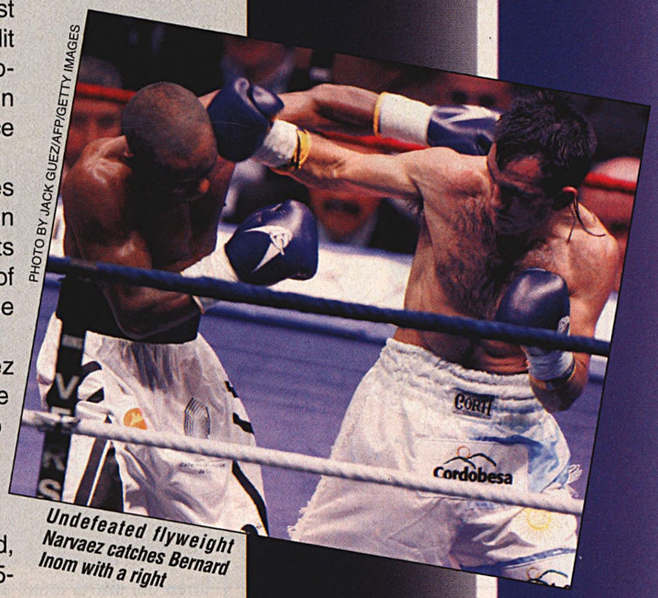
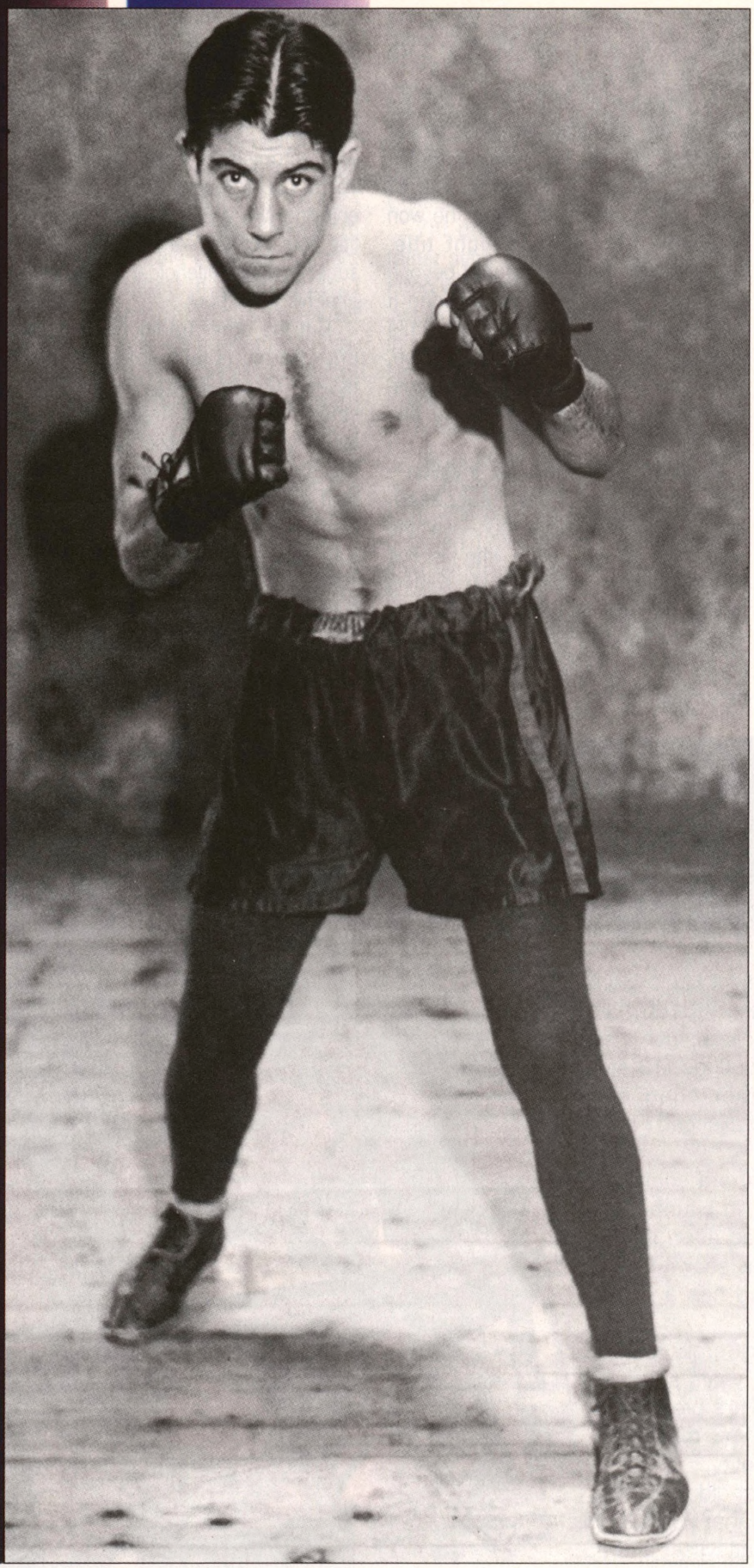


PHOTO BY JACK GUEZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Undefeated flyweight Narvaez catches Bernard Inom with a right



Big things were expected of lightweight Justo Suarez when he came to the U.S., but a bout with tuberculosis cut short his career.

looked possible, until, in the 15th and final round, Ali found his mark, stopping Bonavena, 58-9-1 (44), in the final minute of the fight. After that, Bonavena lost a couple more and slid out of contention.

Bonavena, like Galindez (who died in a car crash in his first attempt at being a racecar driver), faced an early death, although in his case it was a bullet in the heart, fired by an employee at a brothel, owned by Ringo's estranged ex-manager.

Galindez' great rival was Jorge Ahumada, who had his big chance in 1974 in his 47th bout, when he challenged the fading Bob Foster for the world light heavyweight title. Ahumada grabbed it with both fists, dishing out a one-sided beating and seemed an easy winner after 15 rounds. Instead, he emerged as the victim an unfair draw in Foster's hometown of Albuquerque, New Mexico. For a few months, Ahumada was the uncrowned champion, but he blew it by losing three of his next four fights before retiring in 1975.

Yet, for every Bonavena and Ahumada, there is a queue of candidates to fulfill the Argentinean theme of sustained nurturing at home before being released into the wider world with unexpected success. Julio Cesar Vasquez, for example, won the WBA junior middle title in his 41st bout, in 1992, and then fought all over the world in two productive title reigns (11 title fight victories). Juan Martin Coggi, 75-5-1 (81), won the WBA light welter title after 34 fights (31 wins)—all home-based—after which he exceeded expectation when he began to travel, with 12 title wins in two reigns.

But perhaps the most inspiring recent example of apparent mediocrity giving way to sustained success comes from that heavy-handed brawler from Buenos Aires, via Santa Cruz, Jorge "Locomotora" Castro. After one-sided losses at the hands of Terry Norris and Roy Jones, he was not exactly considered a future world-beater, and the opinion hardly changed when he squeaked home on a dubious hometown split decision over Reggie Johnson to lift the WBA middleweight title in August 1994.

Pascual Perez shows off the trophy given to him when he beat Yoshio Shirai to win the world flyweight title in 1954. The Argentinean kept the title until 1960 and is considered among the finest 112-pounder of all-time. He was elected to the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1995.

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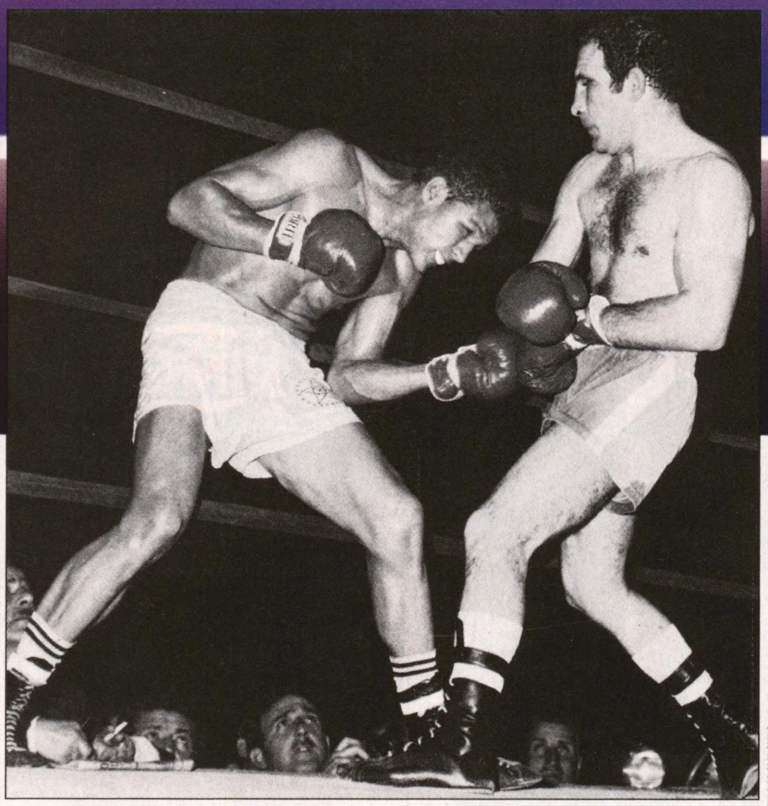
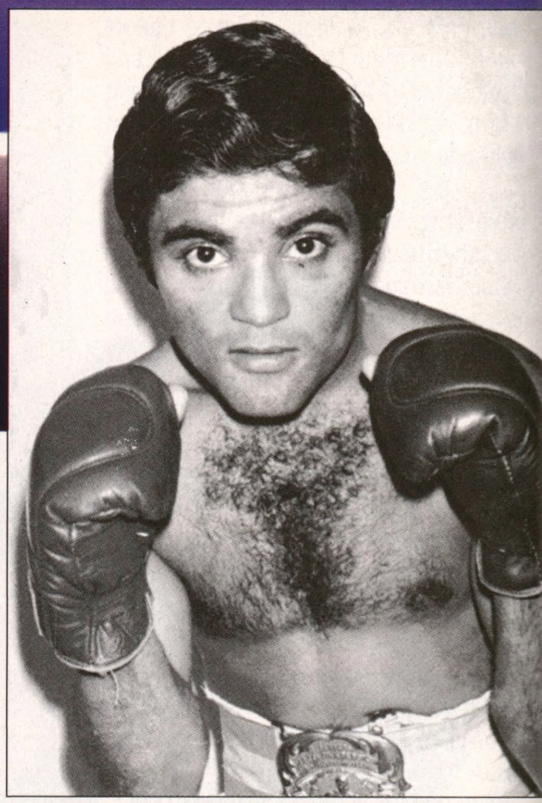
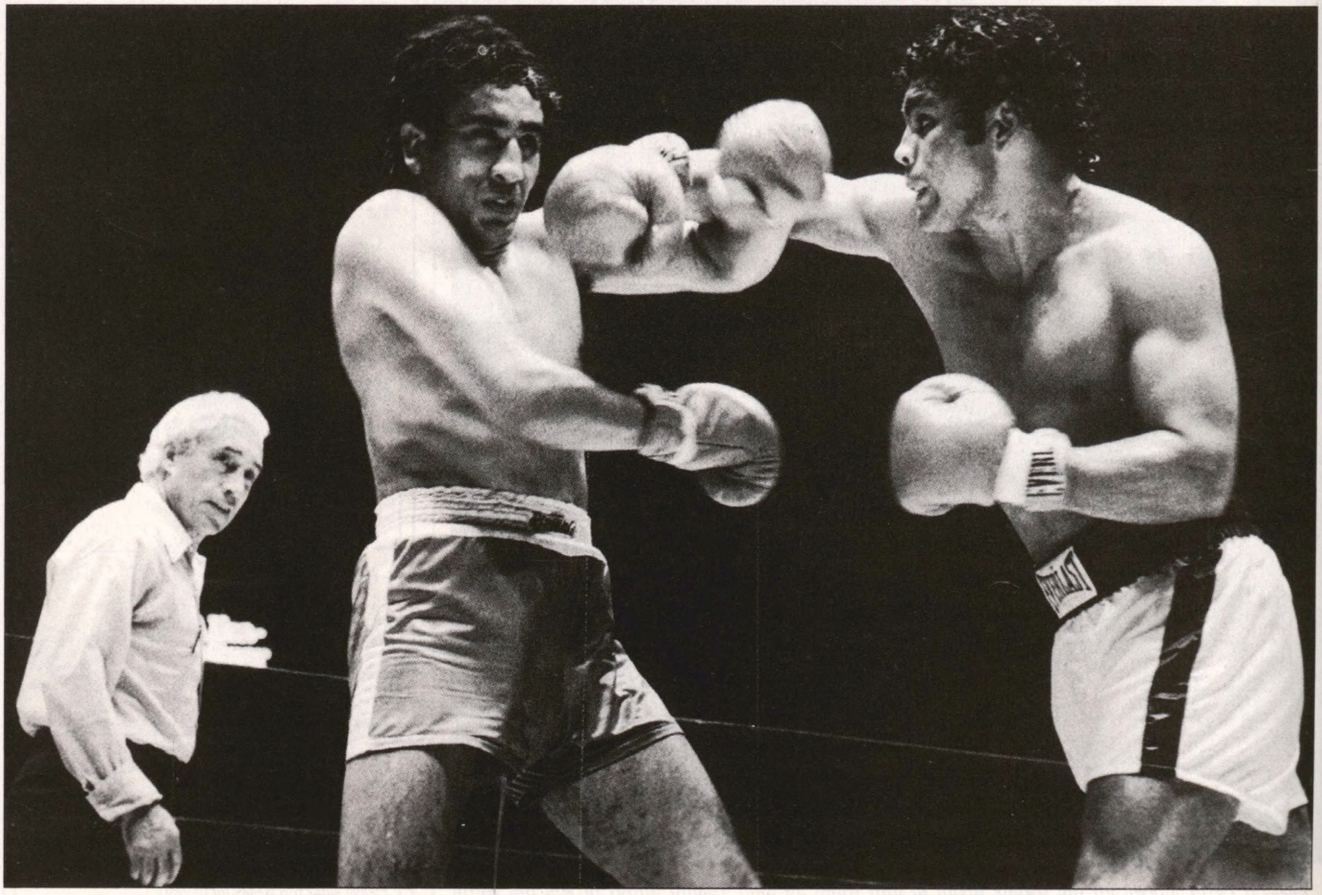


Defensive genius Nicolino Locche (right) wards off Brazilian challenger Joao Henrique to win a 15-round decision and retain the junior welterweight title in a bout held in Buenos Aries in 1969.



WBA flyweight titleholder Santos Laciar was another of Argentina's terrific fighters. He never lost the 112-pound belt in the ring; he relinquished it to move up to junior bantamweight.



Victor Galindez tosses a right at countryman Jorge Ahumada during their WBA light heavyweight title bout at Madison Square Garden in 1975. Galindez kept the belt via 15-round decision. Galindez retired in 1980, only to be killed in an auto racing accident.

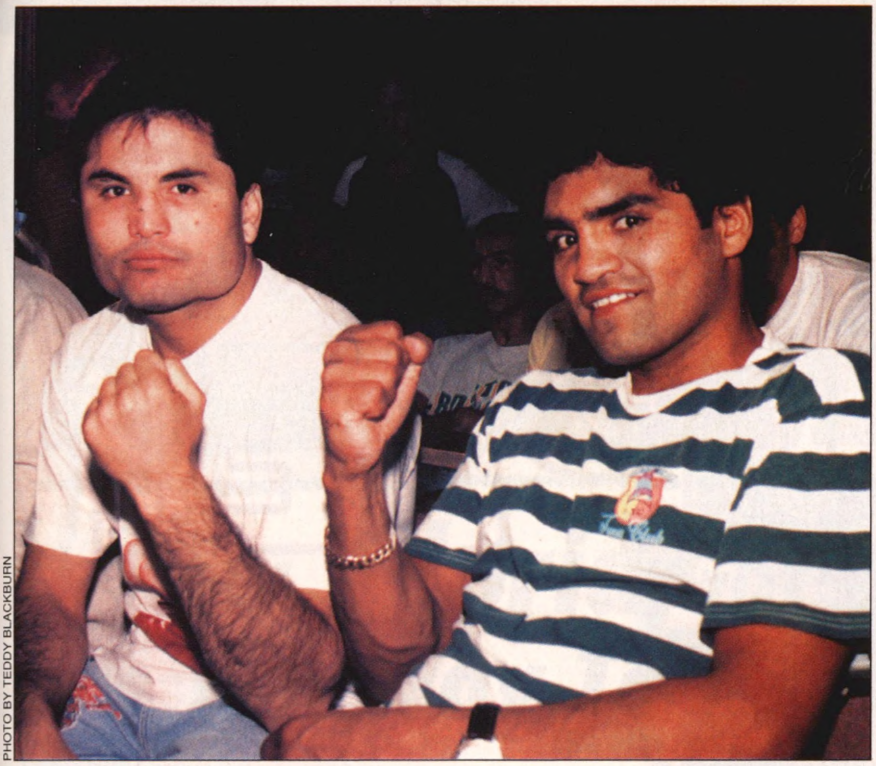


PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

Argentine tough guys Julio Cesar Vasquez and Jorge Castro at a Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, fight card in 1995. Both held alphabet titles and represented their country well for a number of years.

But respect arrived four months later, when, in a rare venture north, Castro traveled to Mexico to pull off an astonishing, one-punch, come-from-behind knockout of John David Jackson. After that, he continued to fight in elite company, beating Jackson and Johnson again, Roberto Duran, and Imamu Mayfield, among others. True, the verdicts in some of his victories were distinctly Argentinean, but he was still in contention, at cruiserweight, in the late-1990s, and only retired after 143 fights—a decision prompted by a near-fatal auto accident.

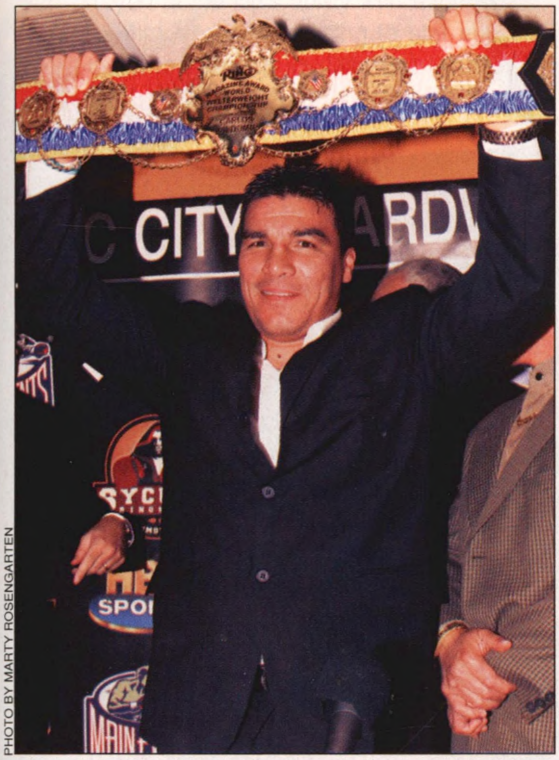


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Baldomir shows off The Ring *championship belt he won by beating Judah. He's already defended it once, and if he follows in the footsteps of some of his more illustrious countrymen, he'll hang on to it for a while longer.*

So then, back to Baldomir. The notion that he may have surpassed himself and that he is bound to slide seems dubious when considered in the light of his country's fighting past. Having cleared the world title hurdle and defended it in even more impressive style, we can assume he will keep on coming. There is, after all, a tradition to uphold. ■

Gavin Evans is a British freelance writer and a regular contributor to this magazine.

DON'T MISS

RING UPDATE WITH WILLIAM DETTLOFF

EVERY MONDAY ... EXCLUSIVELY ON: thering-online.com

Always insightful and often provocative, William Dettloff, *The Ring*'s senior writer, is the thinking-fans' columnist, a writer who never settles for the same old stale commentary you've already read a dozen times. For example, here's Dettloff's take on a handful of hot topics:

The dangers of boxing: "Long after you and I and everyone we know are long gone, men will still be fighting one another with their fists, and sometimes bad things will happen as a result. You may feel guilty about that fact if you wish. I will not."

Nicolay Valuev: "He's hairier than Robin Williams and facially looks an awful lot like Lurch from *The Addams Family*. In today's heavyweight division, that can get you a good long way."

The lack of a dominant heavyweight: "When a heavyweight champ is dominant, the only fun comes in wondering when someone will cut him down to size and how. We rush a guy to the top of the mountain just for the pleasure of watching him get knocked off."

Dettloff on thering-online.com ... The perfect way to answer the week's opening bell!

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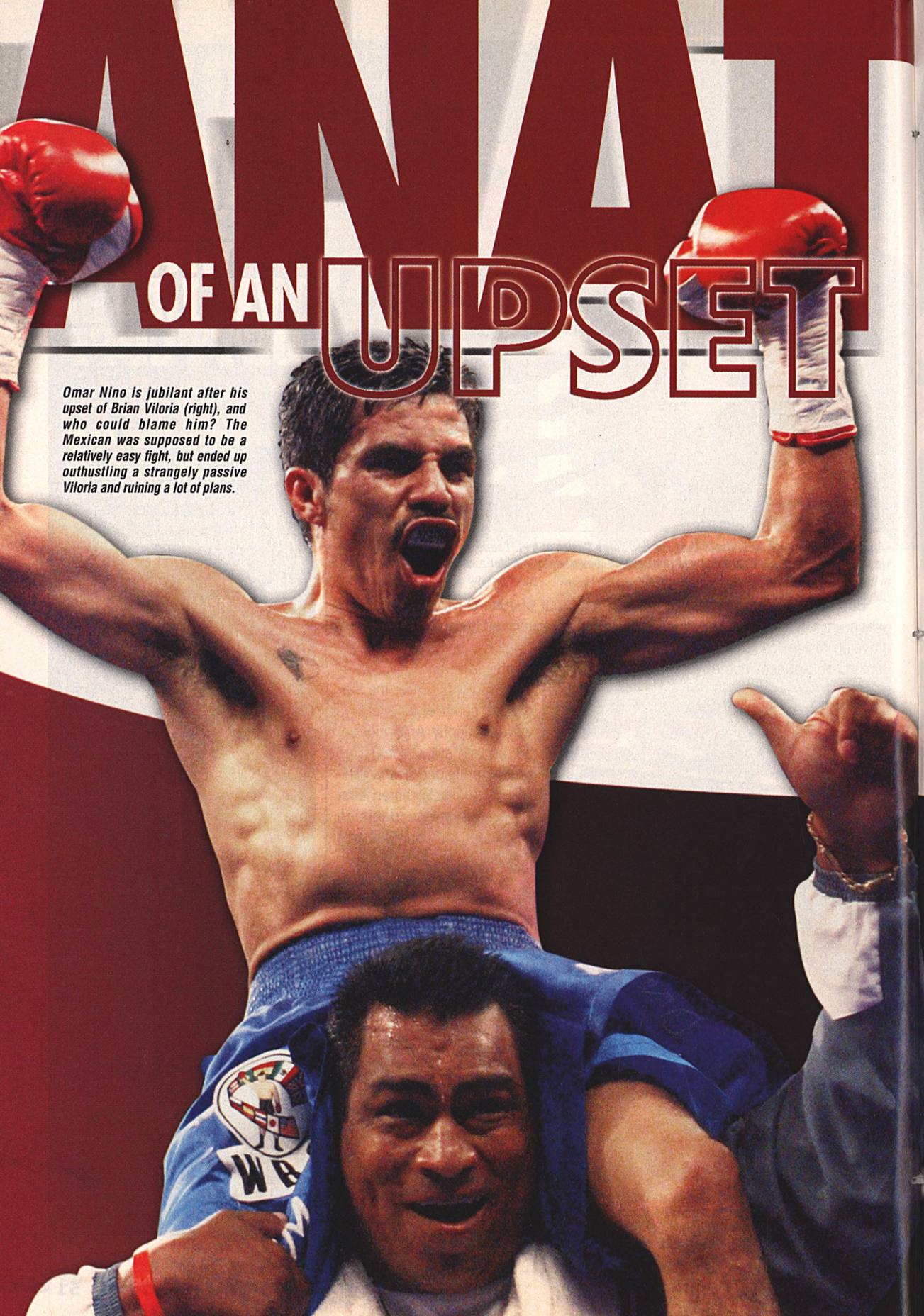
ANATOMY OF AN UPSET



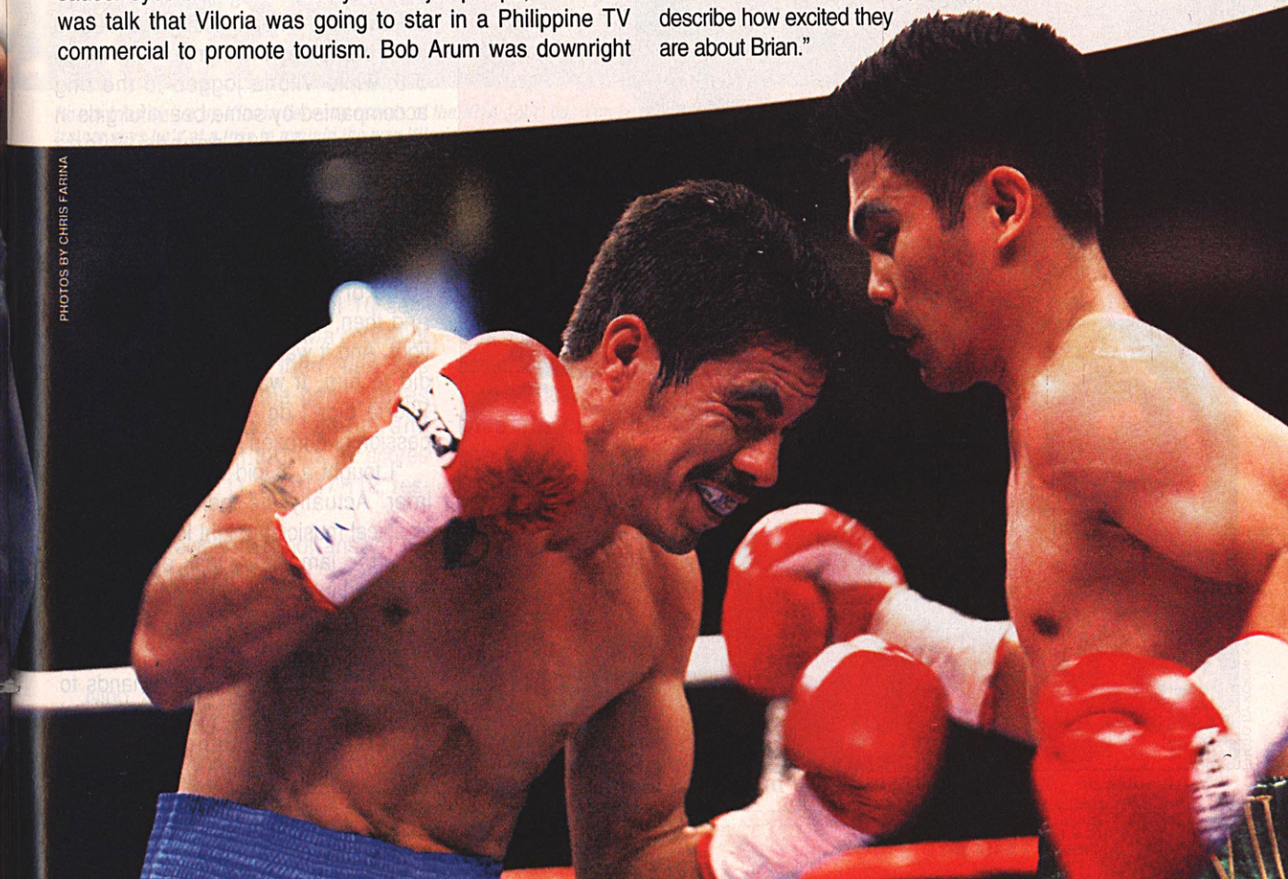
Omar Nino is jubilant after his upset of Brian Viloria (right), and who could blame him? The Mexican was supposed to be a relatively easy fight, but ended up outhustling a strangely passive Viloria and ruining a lot of plans.

How Viloria Got Tripped Up On The Way To A Million

By Don Stradley

Brian Viloria's camp was upbeat prior to his recent bout with Omar Nino. Viloria's manager, Gary Gittelsohn, bragged about having to scramble around Las Vegas to find extra tickets for the Philippine dignitaries who had flown in to see their new hero in action. Spectators were saucer-eyed at the kid's ability with a jump rope, and there was talk that Viloria was going to star in a Philippine TV commercial to promote tourism. Bob Arum was downright giddy when he talked about pitting Viloria against Japan's Koki Kameda in a bout that would shake things up on an international level. Viloria, Gittelsohn assured us, had the potential to be a superstar in two countries, the first million-dollar mini-flyweight since Michael Carbajal.

"Call me after the fight," Gittelsohn said. "Give them time to do the urinalysis and all that. I'll have some people from Solar TV with me; that's the Philippine equivalent of HBO. I can't even describe how excited they are about Brian."



PHOTOS BY CHRIS FARINA

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

PHOTO BY KOICHI KAMOSHIDA

Viloria, along with trainer Freddie Roach (left) and manager Gary Gittelsohn (right) were all in a happy mood before the fight, looking forward to a big payday against Japanese star Koki Kameda (below), who became hugely popular after he beat Juan Jose Landaeta to capture the WBA junior flyweight title.

The optimism continued all the way up to Viloria's ring entrance. Ringsiders at the Orleans Hotel and Casino were blasted by the theme from *Hawaii 5-0*, while Viloria jogged to the ring accompanied by some beautiful girls in hula gear. At 108 pounds, Viloria looked like a little porcelain statue, the sort found in a very old lady's curio cabinet. Still, he was the undefeated WBC titlist, so he deserved at least some of the hype surrounding him. And then, inexplicably, Viloria lost the fight. And it wasn't so much what Nino did to him. It was more about what Viloria didn't do. He fought with the passion of a frozen ham.

"I fought a stupid fight," Viloria said later. Actually, he looked the way a classical musician might look if he was forced to jam with a funk ensemble—totally unable to find the groove. Nino used a weird stutter step, ala John Ruiz, to keep Viloria off-balance. Any time Viloria used his quicker hands to land something, the Mexican walked right through and landed his own shots. Viloria seemed to do less as

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Roach tried to fire up Viloria between rounds of the Nino fight, but simply couldn't find a way to instill a sense of urgency in his lackluster fighter. The trainer says he's at a loss to explain the way Viloria performed, but suggested a change in weight might help.

each round passed. During the 12th round, when he should have gone berserk and done some damage, he acted as if he had all the time in the world. Sure, during the final 10 seconds he scowled and threw a couple of right crosses, but by then Nino was practically wearing the belt. Judges Adalaid Byrd, Chuck Giampa, and Mark Green gave it to Nino by scores of 118-110, 117-111, and 117-112, respectively.

Gary Gittelsohn did not answer his phone when we called.

* * *

Nino, 24-2-1 (10), had seemed like a perfect mark. He was 30 years old and had never fought in an American ring. He wasn't known as a big puncher, and he'd been kayoed twice in the past, including once by Gilberto Keb Baas, a fighter Viloria kayoed with a bodyshot. Early in his career, Nino scored a one-round knockout of Jorge Arce, but Arce was only 17 at the time; Viloria's people assumed it had happened so long ago that it couldn't mean much now. But Nino obviously learned something about boxing in Guadalajara. How he got the opportunity to fight Viloria was part fluke and part fate.

"Viloria hurt his hand during his last fight," said Top Rank's Ricardo Jimenez. "The WBC wanted to have an interim fight to pick his next opponent. If his hand didn't heal in time, whoever won the interim match would get the WBC belt." According to Jimenez, had Viloria not injured his hand, he would have fought two months ago against the WBC's top contender, Juanito Rubillar. Instead, Rubillar fought Thailand's Wandee Singwangcha in the interim bout and lost. Singwangcha moved into the top contender's position, but since he needed time off after beating Rubillar, Viloria needed an opponent to keep the WBC bloodsuckers off his back. Enter Mexican promoter Fernando Beltran.

"He suggested Nino because they could get him a visa," said Jimenez. "Lately, it's a problem to get Mexican fighters to come over. So Viloria's people gave Nino's name to Top Rank, and they called him."

It may sound like a cavalier way to guide a young fighter's career, but Jimenez feels a promoter can only do so much. "In the end," he said, "it's real-

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ly up to the fighter. We can try to find the right opponents, but in the ring it's up to him. All fighters have bad nights."

But why was it so bad? Trainer Freddie Roach was still mystified a few days later.

"It was impossible to motivate him," said Roach. "I'm not sure if it was the weight. I can't figure it out myself. He was uninterested, maybe bored. He just had a real bad night. After six rounds I knew he was behind. I just couldn't get him going. The guy was a counterpuncher, and Brian tried to counterpunch him, but he was flat as could be." Had there been any problems in the gym? "Brian was in very good shape, as usual. Even though the other guy had never been knocked out, I thought Brian would take care of business kind of quickly. Brian has great power for his size. I actually thought it was going to be an early night."

Roach looked at tapes of Nino and wasn't impressed. "Nino had one great win when he knocked out Arce a long time ago, but he was nothing exceptional. He outhustled Brian, actually. He was a little bit busier, and Brian was looking for the one-punch knockout. You could see my frustration in the corner. I slapped him to get him going, I had his father come up and talk to him. I tried everything. Nothing worked.

"Brian's disappointed. He doesn't have an answer for anybody. The only thing I can put my finger on is after the last two fights, this one was very unengaging. Nino didn't look that great. Maybe Brian is struggling to make 108 pounds and we should move to 112. That's something we'll have to take a closer look at. They were all looking forward to fighting in Japan, and sometimes a young fighter looks ahead. They were talking about it too much, and I jumped on them about that. I had to throw a lot of people out. I thought I did it in time, but that could have been a factor, for sure."

Still, Roach sees Viloria as the main culprit in the loss. "He should have been throwing combinations and been more active. He didn't do anything. He didn't want to exchange with the guy too much. Brian is usually stronger than his opponents, so I think Brian lost too much weight too fast. We'll try to be a little smarter about the weight next time. We may try 112. It depends what kind of offer we get. But I think we'd do better in a rematch. Hopefully, we'll get this guy one more time."

The story was as old as boxing itself. It was the unheralded working stiff vs. the pampered star. Nino had just become a father, too, so he fought as if he were Jim Braddock trying to bring milk home for the family. Meanwhile, Viloria was being followed around by a Japanese film crew. He was the new golden child, and even though he seems to be a humble young man, newfound celebrity is bound to dull your edges. Especially if you're 25. Especially if you're bored.

It started last year when Viloria, 19-1 (12) with 1 no-contest, won the WBC mini flyweight title by stopping Eric Ortiz in one round. The fight was beamed to the Philippines because Manny Pacquiao was in the main event. Viloria, who was born in Honolulu but lived in the Philippines until he was six before returning to Hawaii, acknowledged his roots by wrapping himself in the Filipino flag. The Filipino people went gaga for him. He was invited to the Malacanang Palace to be honored by Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. As he toured Manila, every cab driver and hotel doorman recognized him. "It's the kind of attention that never would have happened in Hawaii," said Gittelsohn.

Between teenage golf brats and college football, Viloria isn't always the top headline-grabber in Hawaii. In fact, when the *Honolulu Star Bulletin* listed the top sports stories of 2005, Viloria's WBC title win was bested by the achievements of the EWA Beach Little League team. No wonder he draped himself in the flag of the Philippines.

Arum used Viloria's Philippine connection to create a tacky sales pitch for the proposed Viloria-Kameda fight. He planned to have Viloria say he would seek revenge for Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor that resulted in the deaths of so many Filipinos. At the press conference for the Nino fight, Viloria parroted Arum's spiel, but couldn't say the

PHOTO BY CHUM CORNEJO/COURTESY OF GARY GITTELSOHN

Viloria, who is of Filipino decent, received a Solar Award, along with Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista (far left) and Manny Pacquiao (center), when he visited the Philippines earlier this year. The loss to Nino, however, has stalled Viloria's attempt to cash in on the boxing craze sweeping the country thanks to Pac-Man's unprecedented popularity.

lines with a straight face.

Arum's bad taste continued when he had Hasim Rahman carry Viloria like a baby for the photographers on hand. If that wasn't bad enough, publicist Bill Caplan also took a turn carrying Viloria for the photographers. We don't know Nino very well, but if Caplan tried to carry him for a gag photo, we'll bet Nino would have punched him in the mouth.

Nino's nickname is "The Giant Killer," and in beating Viloria, he may have killed a giant international promotion. Granted, Viloria and Kameda may still fight in the future, but Nino has stripped it of some allure. In fact, with wins over Arce and Viloria, Nino should be considered a big player on the flyweight scene. A rematch with either should put a few bucks in his pocket. He deserves it. He's married with a new son, also named Omar, and has supported his boxing career by working in an electronics factory. "I wish I could tell you something about him," said Bernardo Osuna of Telefutura's *Solo Boxeo*. "But I'm in the dark about him like everyone else." Perhaps the lesson here is this: Don't assume a guy is easy just because you've never heard of him.

"We weren't looking for an easy opponent," said Jimenez. "Top Rank wanted an entertaining fight. We knew Nino had sparred with some world-ranked fighters. Oscar De La Hoya had said good things about him. But from what I read out of Mexico, Omar Nino was considered good, but not of championship quality."

The same might be said of Brian Viloria.

There's a duel nature at work in Viloria. He's a prizefighter, but thinks his future could be in film or journalism. He's a puncher, but many of his fights have been dull decision wins. Even the bout that put Ruben Contreras in a coma was pretty dull. We wondered if Viloria's poor showing was a delayed reaction to the Contreras fight.

"I don't think so," said Roach. "Brian has had a couple of fights since then and Contreras came out of it okay. It's just that in other sports you can have a bad night, but in boxing, you're not allowed a bad night."

Actually a bad night is when the fight is stopped because of an accidental clash of heads. A bad night is getting kayoed by a punch you don't see. What we saw from Viloria was a kid who was no longer hungry, so he dumped the title. Somewhere in the Philippines, a tourist agency was searching for file footage of Pacquiao to use in their next commercial. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to this magazine.

Now The World Respects Baldomir ... Mayweather Would Be Foolish If He Didn't

By Ivan Goldman

Does Carlos Baldomir stand a chance against Floyd Mayweather?

We'll find out for sure when they meet on November 4 at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas. In the meantime, the question is best answered with other questions: Remember when we used to wonder whether anyone could beat Shane Mosley? Remember when Mike Tyson was considered so invincible that even after Buster Douglas and Evander Holyfield stopped him, he was favored to win the Holyfield rematch? And when Roy Jones was pound-for-pound king, we asked ourselves whether we'd ever see him lose so much as one round.

In time, each of those Supermen stumbled over somebody's Kryptonite. If the wizardly Eddie Futch could devise a strategy that enabled Ken Norton to stand up to all-time great Muhammad Ali over the course of three fights, there has to be some way to get to Mayweather. That's why he trains before a fight—to cut down those possibilities. Eliminating them entirely is something he can't do. In fact, his undefeated record of 36-0 (24) is arguably more of a claim than a reality. The decision over Jose Luis Castillo in their first match in 2002 had a Las Vegas smell to it. But Mayweather proved himself a true champion when he returned better prepared in the rematch and dominated a fighter who, like Mayweather, has earned far more recognition since.

Mayweather, one formidable dude, is a welterweight dynamo clearly deserving of his number-one status at the top of the pound-for-pound mountain. He dominates inside. At a distance, he's quick as mortals come, and he can punch. Hitting him clean is like trying to catch the world's most athletic fly. "Pretty Boy" ducks, moves his feet, moves his head, hides his chin behind his shoulder.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Arturo Gatti absorbs one of Baldomir's right-hand bombs during their July bout in Atlantic City that ended in a ninth-round kayo victory for the Argentinean strongman. The win convinced a lot of skeptics that Baldomir's win over Zab Judah was no fluke and led to the showdown with Mayweather.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

All this frustrates his opponents into committing mistakes they ordinarily wouldn't make. Then he makes them pay in the blink of an eye—and then another, because naturally this classic boxer-puncher throws in combination. Countering him demands great concentration. And while his opponents concentrate on what they're about to do, Mayweather reminds them of what he can do. Angel Manfredy, Genaro Hernandez, Justin Juuko, Diego Corrales, Jesus Chavez, Phillip N'dou, DeMarcus Corley, Arturo Gatti, Sharmba Mitchell, Zab Judah—all found out the hard way.

As he's improved his game, Mayweather's become bolder, more willing to mix it up. We see less dancing and more smacking. He's also proved he can take a punch and punch right back.

Still, even the very best fighters are not best every second of every round. At the same time, even if we accept that Mayweather can be defeated, that doesn't mean any opponent can do the job. So what about Baldomir? Is he up to it?

On the field of battle, Baldomir is a lead tank. Shells bounce off him, and he just keeps coming. Especially in the later rounds this can frustrate an opponent just as surely as Mayweather's adept defense. Baldomir is also superbly conditioned. He's made the weight as a welter for the last 13 years. Moving him back is like trying to push around a building. He carries a much larger frame than Mayweather, who turned pro 17 pounds south of welter.

Logic tells us Baldomir should be weakened by dehydrating himself down to 147, but he remains a strong, strong welter. Logic also tells us that at age 35, Baldomir should be overripe, but much like 38-year-old James Toney, he's fashioned a style for himself that conserves his energy and makes him more dangerous as a fight wears on. Like Toney, Baldomir is no one-punch knockout artist, but he's an accomplished body-banger and doesn't waste punches.

A pure boxer like Cory Spinks, who almost got this fight instead of Baldomir, stands almost no chance against Mayweather. Because although he can almost certainly be beaten by somebody some way someday, Pretty Boy won't be outboxed anytime soon. If he's outfought, it will be down in a trench where there's mud and blood, pitted against a merciless mercenary with no reverse in his gearbox, a guy like Castillo—or Baldomir.

"This is no walk in the park for Mayweather," said Jimmy Montoya, the experienced manager and trainer who runs the Montoya Hoover Street Gym in Los Angeles. "He better be ready. Even if it is a walk in the park, Mayweather better bring his lunch."

Just as the skills and accomplishments of Mayweather are impossible to ignore, the *Rocky*-like attributes of Baldomir are impossible to resist. This is a guy who was groomed for obscurity but refused to accept it. He turned pro in his native Argentina in 1993 and was practically a state secret until he entered a ring with Judah in January as a designated doormat with a record of 41-9-5 (12).

It was easy to conclude he'd be another Patrick Charpentier, the

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Among Mayweather's former opponents, the one who fights the most like Baldomir is Jose Luis Castillo. Although he lost a 12-round decision in their April 2002 fight, a lot of people thought the Mexican should have received the nod. In the rematch, "Pretty Boy" won a clear-cut decision.

WHO'S NEXT FOR THE WINNER?

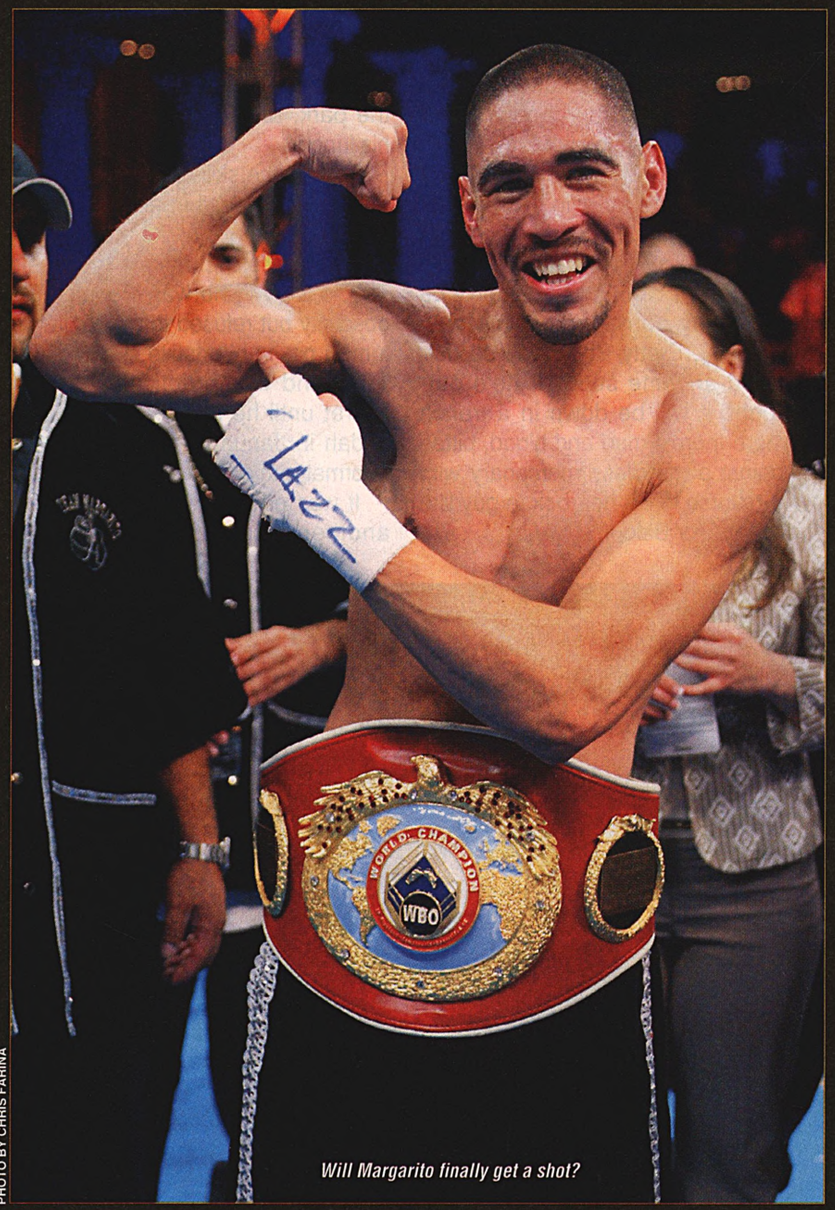


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Will Margarito finally get a shot?

In the next few years, the welterweight division is set to add a load of spectacular matches to its illustrious history. Potential opponents whose teams will be on the phone looking for the winner of Baldomir-Mayweather include:

•Carlos Quintana, 23-0 (18), slick southpaw who gave rising star Joel Julio such a severe boxing lesson.

•Paul Williams, 31-0 (23), a freakishly tall southpaw welter with Lennox Lewis reach and the work rate of a solid flyweight. His *Boxing After Dark* thrashing of Sharmba Mitchell more than lived up to the super-billing given him by Max Kellerman.

•Ricky Hatton, 41-0 (30), THE RING's 2005 Fighter of the Year who tore down the great Kostya Tszyu. He's more of a threat at junior welter, but welterweight purses call to him.

•Luis Collazo, 26-2 (12), a tough New Yorker whose loss to Hatton had more to do with officiating than the fight itself.

•Antonio Margarito, 33-4 (24), a pit bull with arms. With Bob Arum's Top Rank pushing for it, somebody's going to have to stand still for a deal sometime.

•Vivian Harris, 27-2-1 (18), is more than a speed bump.

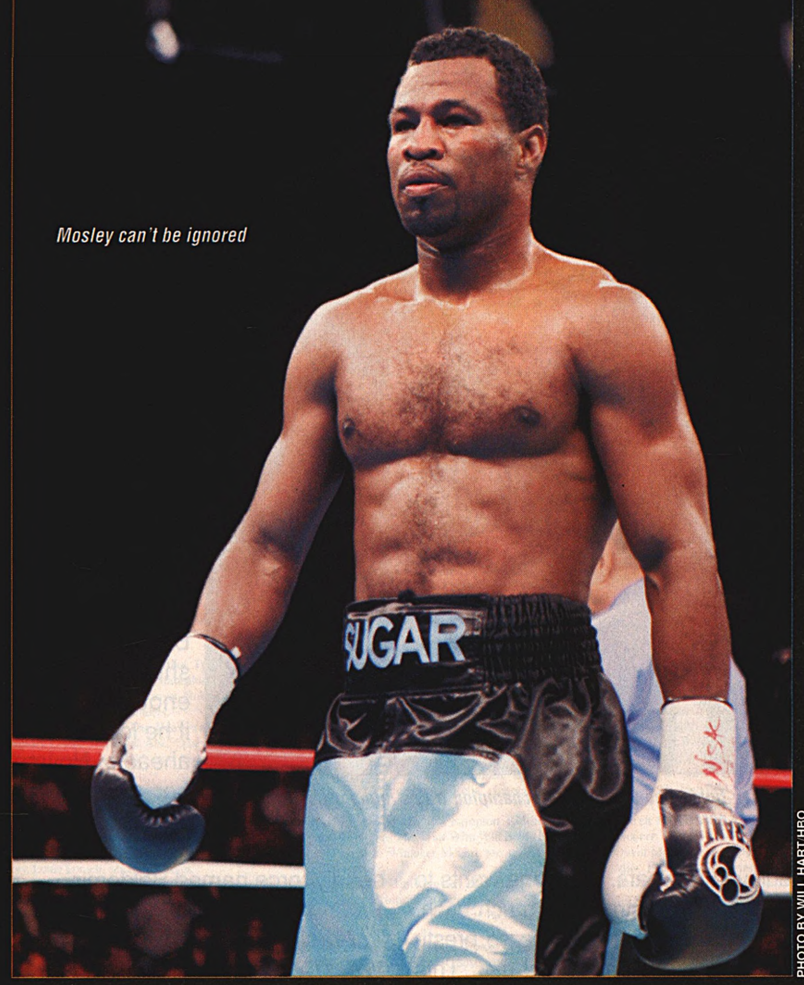
•Sugar Shane Mosley, 43-4 (37), learned from adversity and is working toward a second stage of success. A speedster and brutal bodypuncher who can't be ignored.

•Miguel Cotto, 27-0 (22), a determined Puerto Rican powerhouse outgrowing his junior welter division. His punch will likely travel with him.

•Ricardo Torres, 29-1 (27), a Colombian junior welter with a devil of a punch that dropped and repeatedly rocked Cotto. Could he kayo welters? In a word, yes.

•Oscar De La Hoya, 38-4 (30), is still the big box-office kahuna with his brilliant left hook that's still getting better. He's a super welter, but something can be arranged. A definitive winner of Mayweather-Baldomir against De La Hoya is clearly the biggest, best superfight out there. Who *wouldn't* want a ticket?

—I.G.



Mosley can't be ignored

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

French welter who'd fought in obscurity until he crossed the ocean to face Oscar De La Hoya in 1998 and went straight back to obscurity in less than three rounds. Although he never mussed Oscar's hair, he did manage to return home with a fatter net worth.

But Baldomir was no Charpentier. He turned out to be one of those overlooked hard cases that keep training and waiting for their chance. Somewhere along the line, the much quicker Judah and everyone else learned that the uncelebrated Baldomir was part machine. By the end of 12 rounds in Madison Square Garden, THE RING champion and hometown favorite Judah was running for his life.

Next, we wondered whether the newly titled Baldomir could catch a break against Gatti in Atlantic City, which is like expecting Nicolay Valuev to tap dance. But Baldomir, like Mayweather before him, removed the judges and Gatti's rooting section from the equation by beating him up and stopping him.

Still, Mayweather and Baldomir aren't quite neck and neck measured against common opponents. Yes, they both tore up Gatti inside the distance. And both dominated Judah, who barely managed to finish 12 rounds. But Mayweather's annihilation of Gatti may be the most vicious, one-sided beating since Sonny Corleone caught his brother-in-law Carlo out on the street. Showing him no respect whatsoever, Pretty Boy stood right in front of big-puncher Gatti, which no one is supposed to get away with, and never let him in the fight.

It's most unlikely he'll do that to Baldomir, despite the difference in hand speed. And though Gatti couldn't lay a glove on Mayweather, Baldomir will, for the same reasons slowpoke George Foreman managed to kayo the younger, accomplished Michael Moorer: timing and patience combined with a fierce will and the ability to absorb punishment. If speed were all it took to win, Vernon Forrest wouldn't own two victories over Shane Mosley.

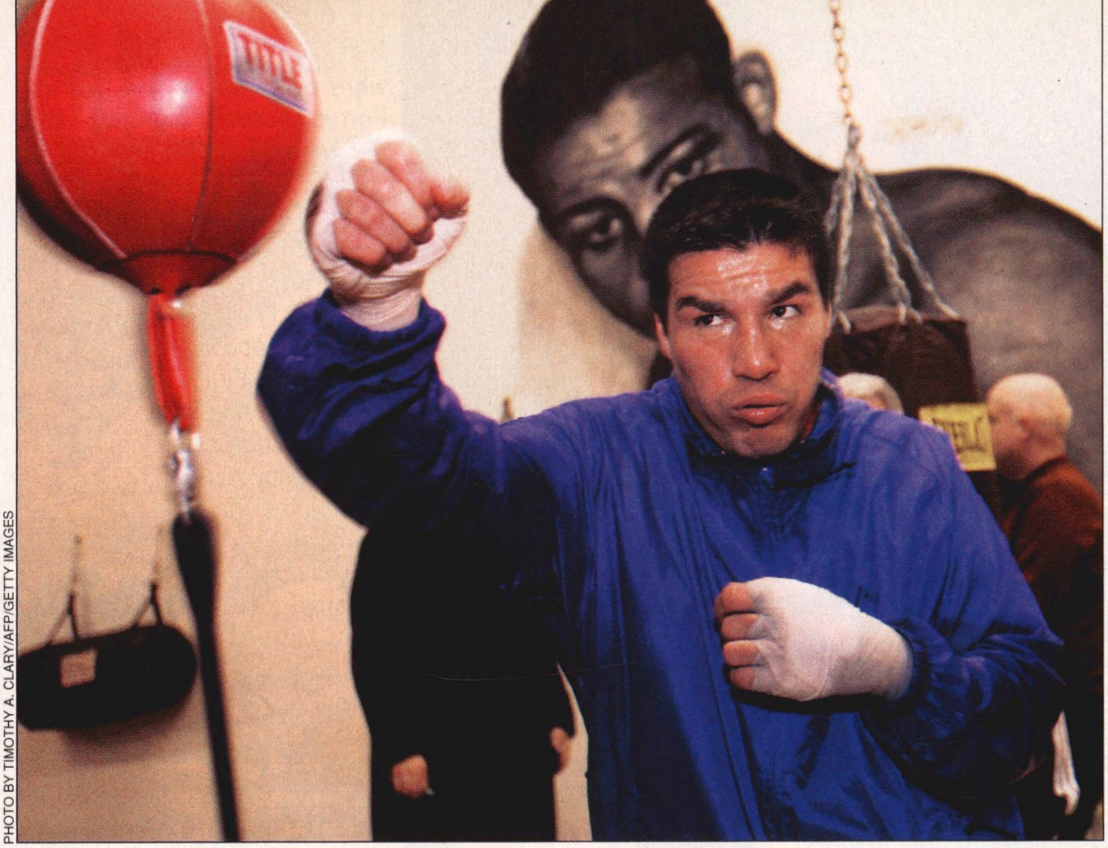
But this is no tortoise and hare story, because the hare was a fool. As Montoya pointed out, Pretty Boy "is a very, very smart fighter." He reads opponents beautifully and tricks them, all in triple time. Fighting dominates the DNA of the Mayweather clan. It's on their breakfast cereal, and though Floyd is only 29, there's nothing that happens in the ring he hasn't seen.

Something else makes Baldomir's bid to keep the title a long shot. Mayweather wanted this match. He could have had Antonio Margarito for the same price (reportedly $8-million plus a lucrative pay-per-view bonus). So Mayweather likely saw more vulnerability in Baldomir. Of course, Baldomir also owns THE RING championship plus a more highly graded alphabet title than Margarito does, arguably making this match more of the spectacle than Mayweather was looking for. But Margarito can't boast of victories over star-studded opponents, mainly because they don't want to get near him. That can't go on forever.

Meanwhile, the tremendous respect Mayweather's talents earned him in the fight world has so far not translated into super-celebrity status beyond that world. Much of this has been his own doing.

With Pretty Boy's spotty legal history, he's poison on the late-night talk-show circuit and in the stiff competition for paid endorsements. On top of all that, Floyd Junior, like his father, Floyd Senior, is an industrial-strength trash-talker. This does not build him popularity around the fight circuit.

If Mayweather gets through Baldomir, as he should, and goes on to dominate the freakishly deep welterweight division, perhaps he won't have to repair his image. Mike Tyson proved that a fighter with a



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Although Baldomir blows up to light heavyweight between fights, the welterweight champion trains diligently and has been making the 147-pound division limit throughout his 13-year career.

truly rotten reputation could still make a fortune (and lose most of that fortune, but that's another story). Then there's George Foreman, a sullen thug who somehow turned himself into America's beloved uncle and made far more money endorsing products than any fighter ever made in the ring. Before that, Rocky Graziano, an ex-con with a World War II dishonorable discharge, eventually got away with projecting himself as a sweet-natured comedic character.

Mayweather has reached a stage in his career that Oscar De La Hoya has enjoyed for years. Everyone wants to fight him. He attracts so much cash, and beating him would be so prestigious, that it's worth the risk. This means when Mayweather fails to make a deal, it's almost certainly because he didn't want a deal.

There are so many formidable welters, it's probably impossible for him to get to them all. In the meantime, at least some of them will take risks by fighting each other instead of looking for record fillers. But Mayweather should be smart enough to know if he looks too far ahead of November 4, he's making himself vulnerable to a deadly force named Baldomir. ■

Ivan Goldman is The Ring's West Coast correspondent.

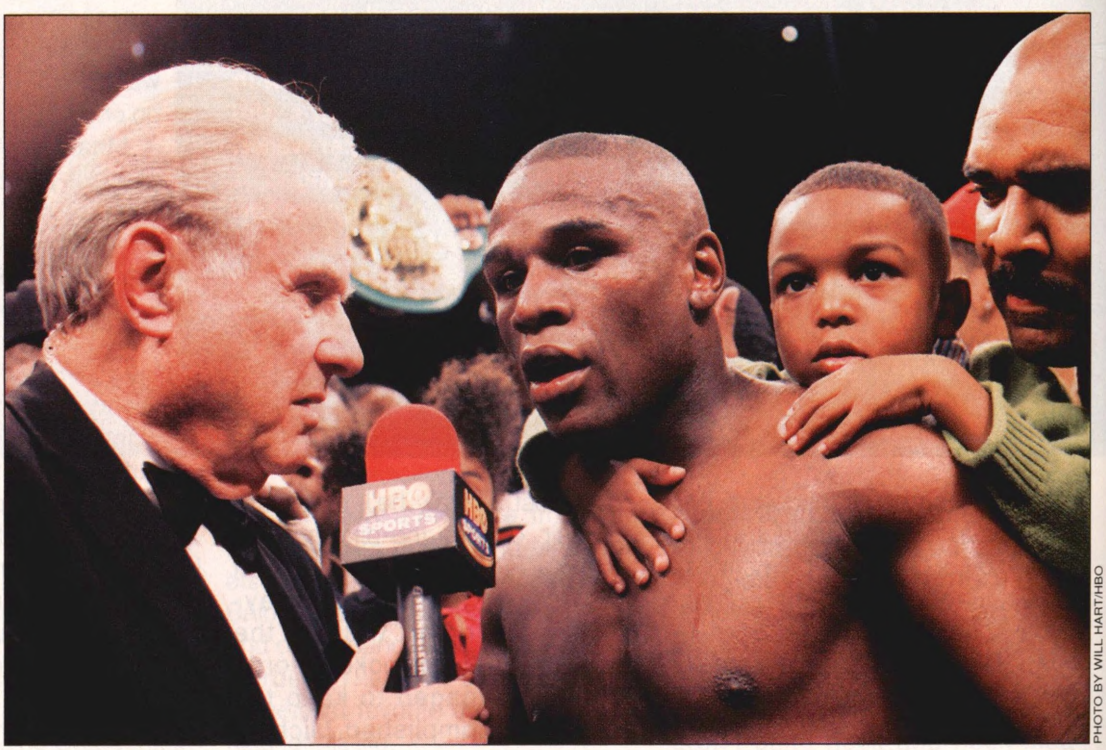

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Mayweather chats with HBO's Larry Merchant after stopping Sharmba Mitchell in November 2005. Despite his vast talent and many accomplishments, Pretty Boy's image has been tainted by out-of-the-ring legal hassles. But continued success could eventually win over the mainstream.

BACK ISSUES OF BOXING 88/2005

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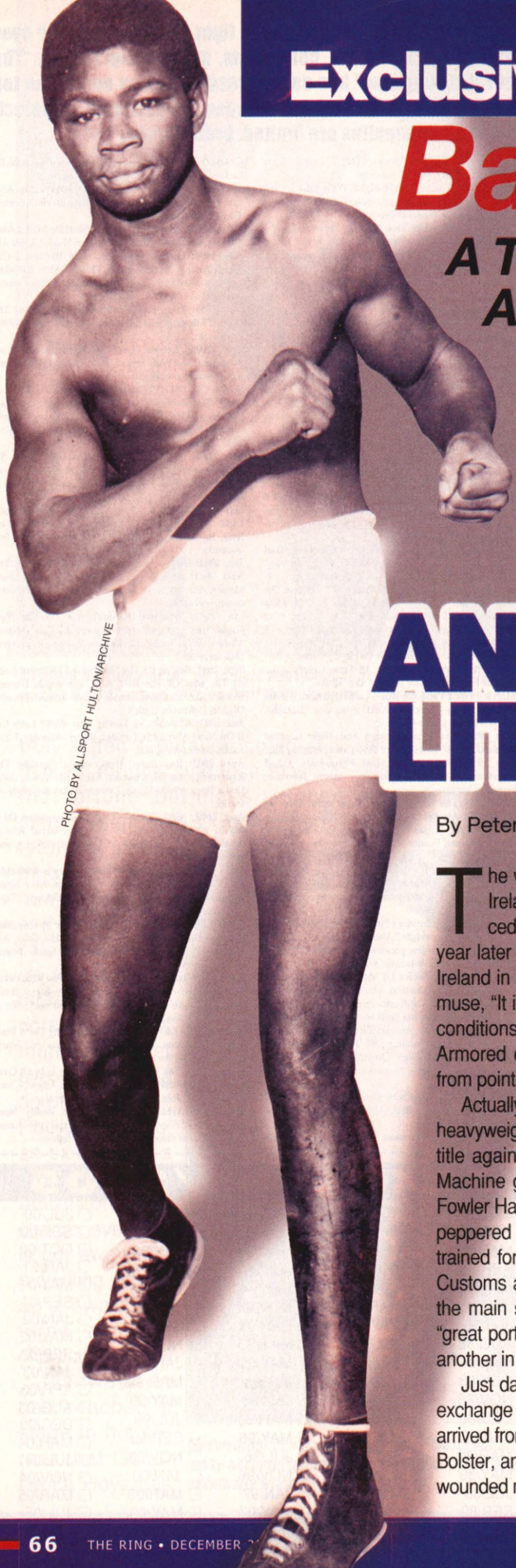

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By Peter Benson

The weeks leading up to Saint Patrick's Day in March 1923 in Dublin, Ireland, weren't much more violent than the weeks and months preceding them. Yet that made them violent enough. In his recollection a year later of the immediate circumstances of the first big fight to be held in Ireland in more than 12 years, Nat Fleischer, in THE RING magazine, would muse, "It is doubtful whether a boxing contest was ever staged under such conditions ... Spectators walked to the theater between rows of guards. Armored cars loomed around corners. Machine guns poked their noses from points of vantage."

Actually, Fleischer understates the reality. Just two hours after world light heavyweight champion Battling Siki's arrival in the Irish capital to defend his title against Mike McTigue, heavy rifle fire broke out throughout Dublin. Machine guns popped up on rooftops and in alleyways, raking city hall, Fowler Hall in Parnell Square, the Bank of Ireland, and other buildings. Rifles peppered a foot patrol near Christ Church Place. Three days later, as Siki, trained for the match not far away, a bomb blew up the Irish Free State's Customs and Excise Office, blasting in the door, caving in walls, collapsing the main stairway, dropping upper floors into the basement, and reducing "great portions of the building" to "debris," killing one policeman and injuring another in the process.

Just days before the fight, a bomb thrown from the roof of the telephone exchange wounded the military guard. The same night, as mobs of fight fans arrived from England, a patron at Dublin's Theater Royale shot Commandant Bolster, an intelligence officer from the Wellington Barracks, in the chest. The wounded man staggered from the theater and fell bleeding in the street.

On March 14, three days before the fight, as a gesture of firmness, the government executed seven men for revolutionary activity. The next day, rebel leaders declared a national period of mourning, forbidding public celebrations on Saint Patrick's Day—including the light heavyweight championship bout. For good measure they hit back with their own executions, shooting down a guard at Glengarriffe Parade, near Mountjoy Prison, and a soldier of the Eighth Infantry Battalion returning to barracks by Charlemont Bridge.

To ensure the safety of the boxers, promoters, and visitors, the authorities turned La Scala Theater, the movie palace where the fight would take place, into a fort. Military patrols circulated on the streets, stopping suspects for questioning. Guards flanked the doors of important buildings. "Siki" said the *Petit Parisien*, "for the first time in his life had a military guard of honor." In fact, a police guard followed Siki wherever he went, mostly to protect him from photographers hoping to shoot bootleg newsreels, as well as "crowds of autograph hunters." Siki himself received a death threat—written in Gaelic. The authorities considered conveying him to the fight in an armored car.

You'd think that machine gun rounds, terrorist bombs, and a grisly round of executions, not to mention the antagonism of the church, might turn the sporting public off to the upcoming fight, but in fact when the train carrying the world's champion pulled into Dublin's Kingsbridge Station at 7:00 p.m. on March 5, 1923, the detachment of soldiers stationed outside the gates could hardly restrain the crowd. Once inside the station, the "jostling crowd of men and women" rushed the private carriage carrying the world titleholder. When he came down the steps they called out his name and clapped him on the back, delighted to have a chance to "catch a glimpse of his face." The muscular black man grinned in acknowledgment. Though he spoke five languages, none of them was English—or Gaelic. His blonde Dutch wife beamed alongside him, as grateful as the champ himself for the tumultuous welcome.

The glee that greeted Siki in Dublin contrasted weirdly with the attitude toward him that trailed in the wake of journalists pouring into Dublin from London, Paris, and Rome, or, for that matter, with the notion of him holding sway in faraway Boston and New York, both of which had been proposed as rival venues to host the new champion's first title defense. The only reason Siki was fighting in Dublin at all, in fact, was because of the storm of controversy and abuse that had inundated him in other places.

Only a clever stratagem by Siki's manager Charles Brouillet, in fact, had fixed it so that Siki could arrive in Dublin with those essential accouterments intact that made the trip worthwhile: his French and European boxing titles, his world title, a visa, and a boxing license. Life had been no stroll in the park lately for Siki. First there had been the little matter of getting paid for the fight back in September 1922 when he'd won the title, flattening French national hero, matinee idol, and anointed sporting icon Georges Carpentier, in one of the most amazing upsets in the history of boxing.

Then there had been the French Boxing Federation's sudden decision to strip him of his French titles and license to box, over an alleged altercation with a rival manager. When an irate and flat broke Siki poured fuel on the fire by announcing to anyone who would listen that the title fight had been fixed, a huge scandal that would come to be called *l'affaire Siki* ensued, involving even the French Chamber of Deputies, dragged unwillingly into a debate over the chicanery of the clique that ran French boxing and the fate of a recently obscure black boxer.

Siki is greeted by a member of the military upon his arrival in Dublin. It was during the height Irish Civil War, and the light heavyweight champion had a police escort throughout his visit.

And that hadn't even been the half of it. As the vitriol and feelings of abused vindication spread, even racially tolerant France rapidly came to treat the once-popular boxer as a *bête noire*. He was denounced

PHOTO BY WALSHE/GETTY IMAGES

Siki squares off with an Irish lad in Dublin, while another boy looks on. The African-born Frenchman proved surprisingly popular with most of the Irish, who seemed delighted to have a diversion from the bitter struggle in which their country was embroiled.

as a drunk, a thug who enjoyed assaulting strangers, including the police, in the cafés and on the streets, who enjoyed brutalizing his own blue-eyed bride. He was said to have been caught peddling cocaine, to have behaved lewdly in the company of a minor, in short to have been a public disgrace, a permanent blot upon the sport of boxing. The Fédération Française de Boxe (FFB), after a long, drawn-out commission of inquiry, finally ruled, on January 15, that "in their souls and in their consciences they had the absolute conviction that the match of 24 September [between Siki and Carpentier] had not been preceded by any agreement" to "fix the result."

The American sporting press still smarted from the indignities of having to witness for nearly seven years the one-sided triumphs and extra-pugilistic lifestyle of an unrepentant champion of color, the African-American Jack Johnson, and did not bother to suppress its glee at each new rumor of a Siki outrage. Siki atrocity stories got big play everywhere, from Minneapolis to Memphis, Boston to Buffalo. When the New York Boxing Commission, whose lead other state commissions followed, expressed outrage over tales of Siki's behavior and talked of banning him, Siki's fortunes began to look less rosy across the water as well.

Siki went to Dublin because if he wanted to get paid for fighting he had little other choice. He didn't go to Dublin because he'd never heard of Saint Patrick's Day or was ignorant of the fact that a civil war raged there. Nevertheless, boxing writers soon enshrined an opposite reading. It's the one thing you can count on anyone remembering about Battling Siki, all these years after his death. Siki? Wasn't he the guy who, "in all innocence," igno-

Judging by some of his preflight remarks, McTigue's manager, Joe "Yussel The Muscle" Jacobs, wasn't really expecting his man to win. Then again, with a shrewd operator like Jacobs, it could easily have been a ruse to mislead Siki and gamblers.

rant of "the ominously Celtic overtones of his opponent's name," and perhaps even unaware of "the special significance of the date," came up with the "comical plan" of "fighting an Irishman in Dublin on Saint Patrick's Day"? "Boxing buffs still chuckle," Nigel Collins notes in *Boxing Babylon*, "at the stupidity (or was it brazenness?)" of Siki's mistake. Never mind that this was not the first time, as Fleischer points out, that a world champion defended his title in Ireland against an Irishman on Saint Patrick's Day, and that the earlier champion, though he fought under the name Tommy Burns, was, like Siki, a foreigner, a Canadian, whose real name was Noah Brusso.

Neither McTigue nor his diminutive, cigar-chomping manager, Joe "Yussel The Muscle" Jacobs, had any idea of winning the world light heavyweight championship, and they didn't bother to pretend they did. Jacobs told the *Irish Times* about his plans for the future, once this bout was over. Assuming his man made a good showing against the world champion, he figured to get Mike a shot against British middleweight champ Roland Todd. That fight alone ought to be worth £500 or £1,000. Then, God willing, he hoped to get a shot on the Fourth of July against Johnny Wilson, the middleweight world champion who fought out of East Harlem in New York City.

If McTigue won the light heavyweight title, he'd have no reason to fight Wilson or Todd—but that possibility doesn't seem to have occurred to Jacobs. He wanted his boy to make a good showing against the light heavyweight champ as a springboard for later middleweight bouts. Period. He didn't even mention the possibility of defending the light heavyweight crown. Why should he? Anyone who'd seen Mike box knew he was no slugger. He was one of the best defensive boxers in the world, slippery, elusive, almost impossible to hit with a clean shot. But he never stood still long enough to clock anyone else with a punch harder than your Sunday school teacher might—if you failed to memorize your catechism properly.

Challenger McTigue was not a particularly imposing looking physical specimen, but he was one of the cleverest defensive boxers of his era. Even though he'd spent most of his life in the United States, McTigue was born in County Clare, Ireland.

If you look over McTigue's record, you find that he'd fought past and future champions, including Harry Greb and Battling Levinsky. But he fought them in full retreat, in "no decision" bouts (where victory could come only by knockout). For most of his career, McTigue was a prize ring Houdini, an escape artist who inflicted minimal suffering, but kept his record unblemished by seldom risking a decision. McTigue fought 36 no-decision fights over the course of his career and won only 24 decisions, a greater percentage of such bouts than any ring contemporary, with the exception of Al McCoy, the infamous "cheese" champion of pre-Walker Law days, who prolonged his reign as middleweight champ nearly four years by fighting only no-decision bouts.

A week before the Dublin fight, odds were 2-1 for Siki. But Irish fans had an abrupt change of heart in the last days before fight night, pouring bets in on McTigue, dropping the odds to 7-5. Did they perhaps hear rumors about the fight being in the bag?

As for Siki himself, what he may have thought about the upcoming battle is obscured in the haze of legend. Years later, an old friend of his, sportswriter Gaston Bénac, would tell what he purported to be the true tale of how Siki came to be in Ireland at all. Caught between two managers with rival claims to his allegiance, suffering a recently sprained ankle, Siki, Bénac swore, was balking at fulfilling his contract. One of his managers, faced with a forfeit and unpleasant penalties, came up with a ruse, enticing Siki with a willing lady of the evening, getting him falling-down drunk, paying accomplices to lug him aboard ship "like a sack of coal." They were safely out of sight of land before Siki woke up. As his head began to clear, Siki, always the good sport, said, "Aw, I just pretended to pass out, but I'm

very glad to have tricked (estranged manager Lucien) Deprémond."

Just 24 hours before Siki went into the ring in Ireland against McTigue, the boat that had carried Siki across the channel docked at its final destination, Hoboken, New Jersey, where an enterprising local journalist hustled down to the docks to quiz the sailors about what Siki had been like, how he'd behaved on the boat. A few were glad enough to spin a yarn. Sure, they said. They'd seen Siki, and he was just as wild and crazy as advertised. Why, he'd been carried onto the boat "kicking like a roped calf," drunk as a lord, after a week-long bender. His poor wife, trailing in his wake, had a black eye to show for his temper. Once aboard, they'd locked him in a cabin, which he'd promptly wrecked, bellowing for strong liquors.

Yet another recollection, by patronizing English boxing aficionado Fred Dartnel (Lord Melford), had Siki sweating out a fit of paranoia in the hours before the match, sure that the Irish referee, the promoter, his own manager, and the international sanctioning board were out to get him. He wouldn't even weigh in, Lord Melford recalled (a fact confirmed by news reports), so worried was he that someone had reached the referee. After all, without a weigh-in the fight couldn't, by the IBU's own rules, be an official championship bout. He insisted on being paid his share of the purse in advance and then secreted it in a belt underneath his ring togs. "Thus equipped," said Melford, he "went forth to battle," though he made it harder on himself in the ring, since he wouldn't allow his seconds to douse him with water between rounds, for fear of spoiling the banknotes under his waistband.

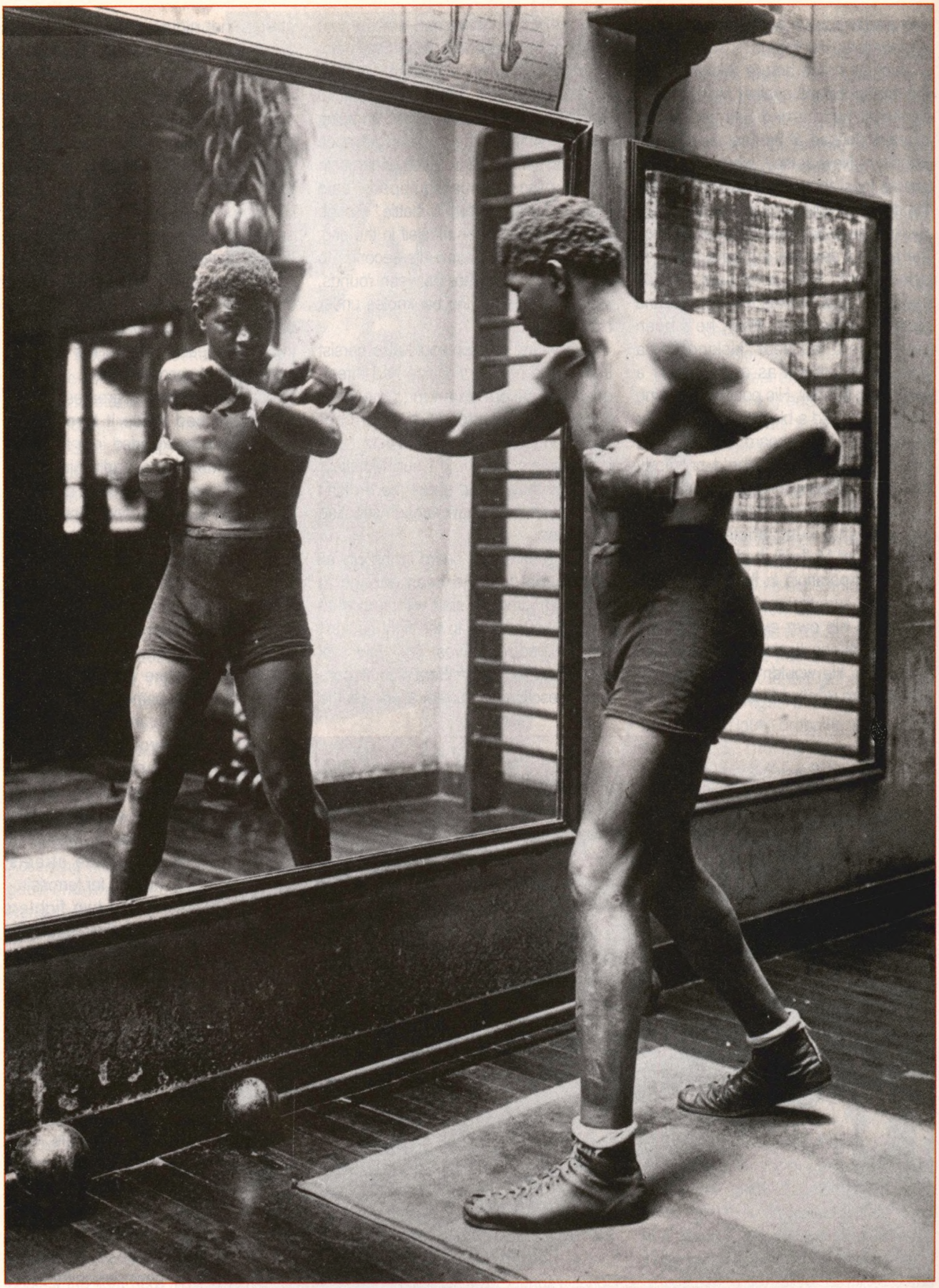
For years, rumors would also persist that armed men at ringside had threatened Siki before and during the bout. Siki himself would tell the African-American journalist William White, "The Irish soldiers told me if I hurt Monsieur McTigue they would shoot me. I didn't want to get shot. I saw enough shooting in the war."

The gunfire he'd heard in the city all week ought to have been enough to make him jumpy to start with, and what he saw on the way to the fight couldn't have calmed his nerves. *The New York Times* and *New York Herald* correspondents described a surreal scene on the streets that night, with army platoons patrolling the neighborhood of La Scala Theater, and a cordon of soldiers surrounding the building, forcing two long columns of ticket holders sporting shamrocks to file down a side street near the bombed-out main post office. When they reached the theater doors, they found CID officers waiting to question and search them, one by one. Despite the whiff of danger in the air, incredibly, an even bigger crowd marked time beyond the barriers, non-ticket holders hoping to barter, bribe, or buy their way in—or failing that at least to share the vicarious excitement at second hand.

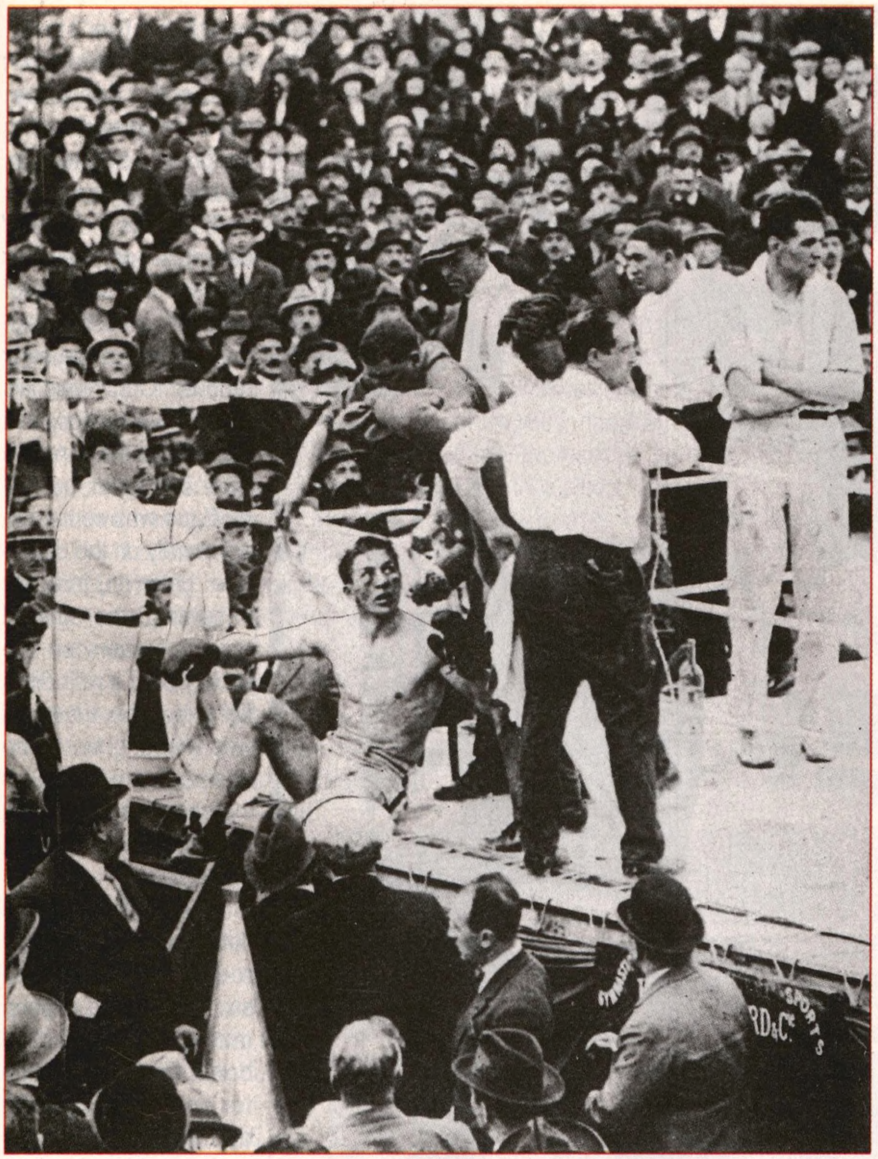
Moments after the greatest part of the crowd had made it through the doors, a bomb exploded in a tenement in nearby Moor Lane, badly injuring two children, blowing out windows and doors in adjacent buildings, and raining glass from the skylights overhead into the hall itself. Outside the theater, fans ran for cover. Inside, rumors spread of open warfare erupting. For once, patrons had the rare experience of sharing the rush of adrenalin that fighters feel on the way into the ring. Before the fight began, a theater manager came forward to proclaim that patrons would be asked to remain seated for hours after the contest ended, to give police a chance to sweep the streets, hunting for terrorists.

Free State Army soldiers, bayonets at the ready, search a train in Dublin. The situation was so dangerous that the fight venue was turned into a virtual fortress to protect the fighters and patrons.

The two fighters made their way down the aisles at 8:00 p.m. (The start time had been moved up to accommodate the hordes of foreign press who had deadlines to meet and trains to catch). Siki wore a purple robe, which he stripped off to reveal a sash around his waist in the French tricolor, McTigue, a slate-blue gown, which he doffed to show off tights of Kelly green. What



France, where black people were generally treated far better than in the United States, had a strange love-hate relationship with Siki. In many ways he fit their idealized image of beautiful savage, but when he claimed his fight with Carpentier was a fix, the relationship soured.



Regardless of whether or not there was an arrangement made for Siki to throw the Carpentier fight, it is clear from this photograph of the battered ex-champ leaving the ring that Siki certainly didn't pull his punches.

happened next is a bit difficult to piece together, so thoroughly has it been reshaped by wishful thinking, rationalization, and outright hallucination.

The huge throng of press at ringside, like many white boxing fans, had strange mixed feelings where Siki was concerned, feelings at once of fascination, revulsion, longing, and dread. The first few years after World War I had seen a rising vogue for all things black, latterly labeled by scholars "Negrophilia." Seen against the futility of white civilization, epitomized in the Great War, blackness took on a powerful allure. Negrophilia accepted, even exulted in, racial stereotypes born in the past century, when (essayist Joseph Arthur) Gobineau had insisted that the white race, alone capable of civilization, would succumb to the lure of more vital "lesser races," dooming their own species to destruction via mixed-race mating. By the 1920s, far from shunning blacks, whites came to see them as more primal, more real than whites. Whites longed to hear black music, read black poetry, watch blacks dance, share black laughter—and yes, see blacks fight in the ring.

Siki's stunning triumph over French national idol, war hero, and cinema celebrity Carpentier had been a defining symbolic moment. It made him at once hero and anathema. His victory had kindled street battles between elated blacks and American sailors in Montmartre, Paris' seamy quarter of cabarets, prostitutes, and drugs. It both shocked white sensibilities and fit neatly into evolving prejudices. A brutal savage, so the media spun the tale, in an outburst of instinctual rage, had overcome a skillful practitioner of the "sweet science" of self-defense. When, months later, Siki disclosed the fight had been set up for a fix, he tarnished what little luster white "civilization" had left. The press, worldwide, reacted by sneering not only at Siki's allegation, but also at the man himself, mocking him as a simple-minded primitive who couldn't deal with the sophistication of civilization.

In America they lampooned him in language borrowed from the minstrel show character "Zip Coon," who appeared on stage in spats, lorgnette, and motley colors. Though nearly every picture of Siki that survives finds him wearing a well-tailored suit and tie, no reference to him was complete without sidelong mention of a tuxedo, top hat, cane, and bright red or purple opera cape. He was routinely referred to as a "child of the jungle," though, in fact, as he put it himself, he had "never even seen a jungle."

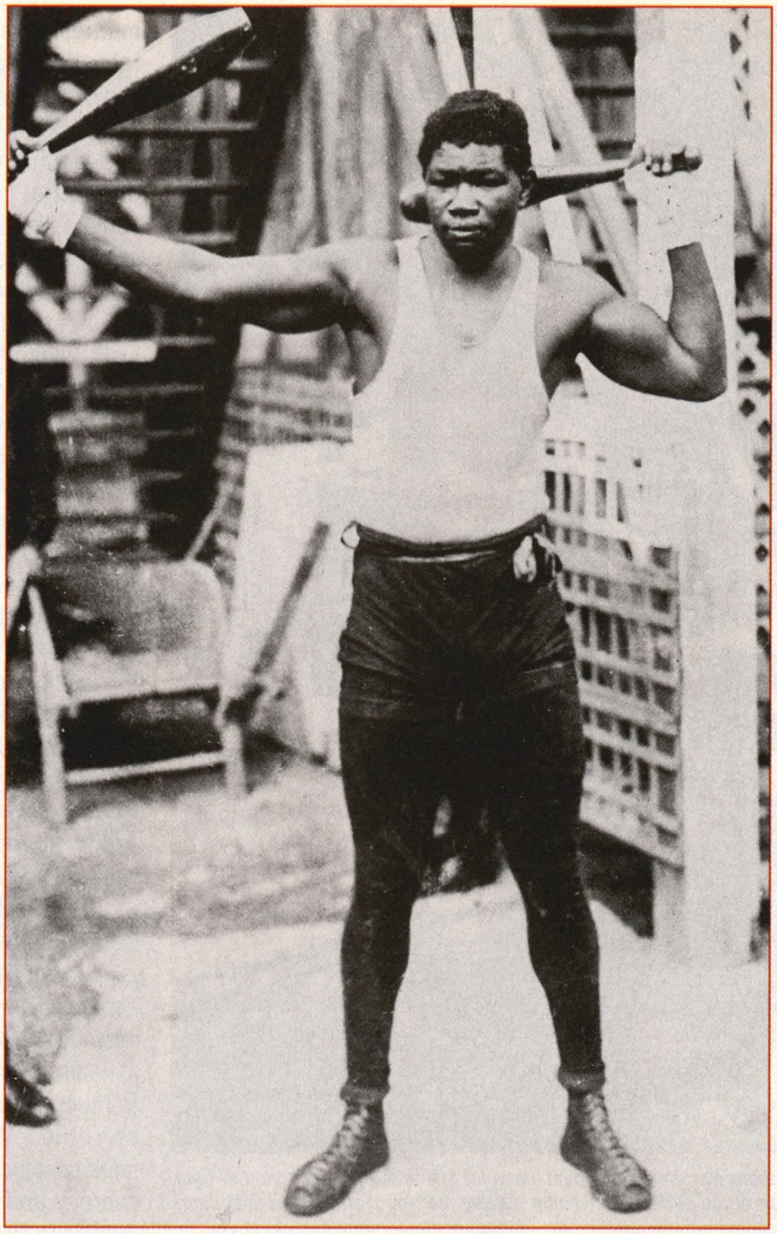
Though Irish fans seem to have accepted Siki simply as a boxer, the international press wrote him up in much the same style as, decades earlier, P. T. Barnum had touted his sideshow attraction the "Wild Man Of Borneo." Impersonated in the 1880s, under sworn secrecy and a bushy wig, by African-American brothers from Long Island, Hiram and Barney Davis, Barnum's Wild Man was made out to be a monster of lust and rage. The press similarly anticipated, from Siki, outbursts of bestial fury. No matter what the outcome of the bout, that angle would find its way into their stories. It was too good to pass up. Some also came wanting badly for the man *The New York Times* called "the French Jack Johnson" to be put in his place—not just beaten, but thrashed. Their judgment of the final outcome is colored by that desire.

War-weary Irish fans, on the night of March 17, 1923, came to the Siki-McTigue contest happy to have a chance again to see championship boxing in their battle-scarred capital city, but the sporting press came primed to see a

test of racial verities. What really happened, therefore, becomes a bit difficult to fathom through the fog of their prejudices. A newsreel of the fight still exists. Though heavily edited, it does allow you to get a clear impression of the tenor of the match, leaving a few distinct images. First, it leaves you with an image of the muscular Siki, in the early rounds, firing heavy punches at the fleeing specter of a pale, almost scrawny McTigue, who skitters away like a crab, twisted sideways, ducking and dodging, flicking up a jab that has about as much impetus as a crab's feeler.

In the middle rounds, Siki continues to chase his pale rival, who pokes his jab straight out like a halfback stiff-arming a linebacker. Siki, irritated, paws it away, then returns to the assault, still missing more than he's landing, but landing hard to the body and head when he does land. In the late rounds, McTigue suddenly and unexpectedly, for an instant, turns the tables, stepping straight inside after a huffing and puffing Siki misses, sticking one, two, three neat straight counters. But then that's it. The film shows no other bursts of aggression from McTigue—and even this brief assault is neither sanguinary nor stunning. Siki, though clearly exhausted, goes straight back to the offensive.

One looks in vain for resolution to the mystery of what really happened in the ring in the next day's round-by-round accounts. So great are the disparities that even lining up the details from the various reports side-by-side in separate columns one comes away scratching one's head, wondering how so many different fights could have occurred at once in the same ring. The *New York Herald* writer, for instance, called the fight "one of the most grueling fights in the modern history of the British prize ring"—and he was right in one sense: This was the last championship fight ever staged over a 20-round distance. Thereafter, championship fights never again went past 15 rounds. *The New York Times*, however, called the bout "a tame affair" and the *Irish Times* labeled it "disappointing." For some writers, the early rounds were all Siki. Some (most notably the *Paris Herald*) have him swarming over McTigue, who barely weathers the storm. Some (*The New York Times*, for instance) have McTigue standing his ground at intervals, gamely firing back.



Although Siki was better known for his wild lifestyle, he did train for most of his bouts. In fact, when he was in Dublin getting ready for the McTigue fight, more than 1,000 people per day paid to watch his workouts.

The *Irish Times'* description of round four offers a fair sample of the more plausible representations of the early rounds: "Continuing his aggressive tactics, Siki landed twice on the body and head; but still McTigue was content to act merely on the defensive. Later on, in some in-fighting, the colored man got home on the body. So far it was Siki's fight, but the Irishman was meeting his fiercé onslaughts with amazing coolness, wonderful skill, faultless ring craft, and resource."

Their reporter said flatly that Siki won every round through round six. The French papers, many of which had been disparaging Siki for months, said he dominated the early action, though they praised McTigue's clever defense. *Le Populaire* had Siki dominating the first 10 rounds, as did the Paris edition of the *New York Herald*. The English heavyweight champion, Joe Beckett, who had been scheduled to fight Siki himself until the British Home Office banned the bout, commenting on the fight for *The New York Times*, said that as late as the beginning of round 17, he and others at ringside thought McTigue had stayed so passively on the defensive that he no longer had any chance to win, since he had no knockout punch. In the 11th round, Siki split open a gash in McTigue's right eyebrow and in the 12th, reported *Le Populaire*, he tagged McTigue there again, "making the blood flow." Bizarrely, both the *New*

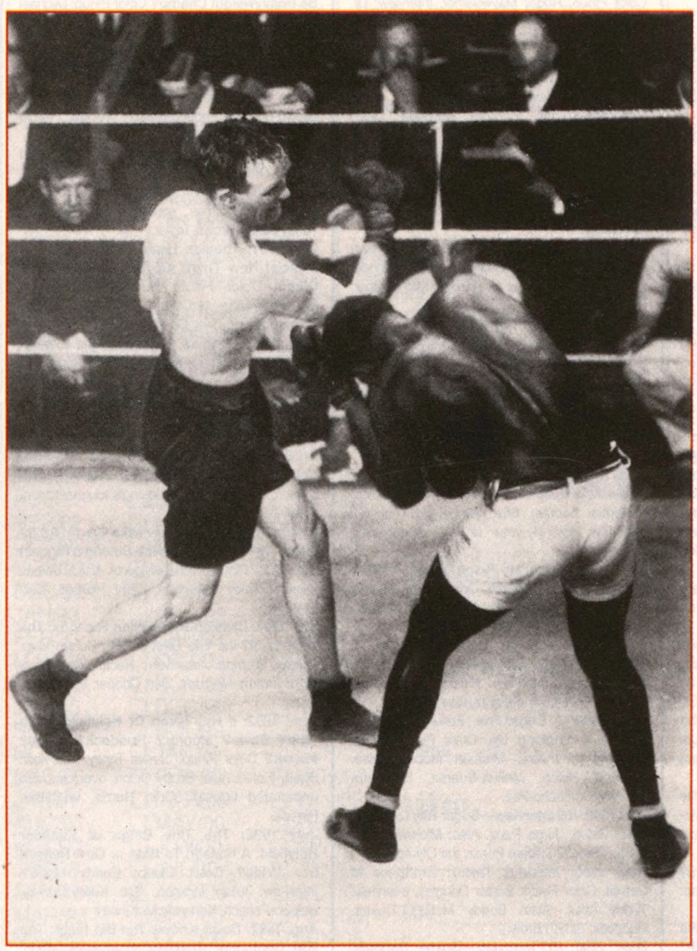
York Herald, Paris, and the *London Times* claim McTigue scored a phantom knockdown in this round. The newsreel of the fight records no knockdowns by either fighter, and no other ringside report makes mention of one. In fact, the *New York World* says plainly, "Neither man was floored or badly damaged at any time." The *Paris Herald* and the *London Times* accounts show other strange similarities as well, suggesting that one was lifted from the other by a not very scrupulous or careful hand. The *Herald*'s story, for example, insists, "At the opening of the fourth round, Siki landed two heavy rights on McTigue's jaw." The *London Times* echoes the Herald, but weirdly reverses the polarity: "In the fourth round, McTigue scored with two heavy rights to the jaw."

McTigue's big moment (phantom knockdowns aside) didn't really come until round 18, when most reports credit that sudden, sharp counterattack the newsreel showcases. Some stories (most notably one later run in the *Boxing Blade*) play up these punches as nearly knocking Siki out, insisting that "only an unsuspected ... ability to take punishment ... enabled Siki to be on his feet" at the bell, but the *Irish Times'* matter-of-fact wording rings truer: "Siki was cleverly countered by McTigue, who penetrated the black's defense with rights and lefts to the head and body." *The New York Times* thought Siki was "well ahead on points" as the bell rang for round 19. The *Irish Times* had him "driving his man to the ropes" in that round, landing to the head and jaw as McTigue "sidestepped out of danger." Though *The New York Times* said the 19th "began badly for Siki," who was "getting all the punishment," it called it "neither's round" and had both men landing about evenly at the final bell.

English referee Jack Smith's scorecard for the Siki-McTigue bout is lost to science, but when the final bell sounded, he strode over to McTigue and raised his arm in triumph. One of McTigue's cornermen, overcome by his emotions (one of which no doubt was astonishment), dropped to the floor unconscious. The Irish fighter's jubilant fans rushed into the ring to hoist him on their shoulders. But not everyone was so happy with the result. The *Petit Parisien* said the verdict was "badly enough received," that "violent protests arose within the hall," and that "the Irish [fans] themselves were not the last to show their discontentment."

Siki fumed, complaining that he'd won the first 17 rounds, and only faded in the final rounds because he'd run out of gas. In his dressing room he stalked back and forth, seething, waiting for the Irish police to give him the word that it was okay to leave the theater. Inside the hall, the fans waited too—for the soldiers to finish sweeping the streets so they could head for the exits. When the last of them finally made it out through the doors, at 11:30 p.m., more than two hours after the fight ended, a sudden burst of revolver fire set the whole throng into a stampede.

Siki himself was practically the last man to leave the arena. He would wait more than two weeks before finding his way back to France. "I am informed on good authority," wrote Frank Withers in the *Chicago Defender*, "that Siki is patiently awaiting the arrival of an American boat to sail for France, as he will not be allowed on British soil." Siki would tell the Parisian sporting paper *L'Auto* that England's malicious maneuver in preventing him from transiting via England had cost him dearly. When he finally did book passage, on the Irish tramp steamer Finola, he was forced to pay an exorbitant 10,000-franc fee and spend four full days at sea. The American press couldn't resist laughing up its sleeve, blaming Siki himself for his predicament, though, as the *Defender* noted, the incident reflected badly on England, not on Siki. Siki himself, chastened but retaining his self-deprecating humor, merely quipped, "I will never go to Ireland again, unless I can cross by way of England. I lost so much weight during the ocean trip to Ireland and back that I am now a middleweight."



McTigue wings a right at Siki during their 20-round bout for the 175-pound championship. Although there is an edited film of the fight and numerous newspaper accounts, conflicting reports make it very difficult to ascertain who deserved the decision that went in McTigue's favor.

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[Editor's note: After returning to France, Siki had three more bouts and then sailed for the United States, where he fought, with mediocre results, until he was shot to death on December 15, 1925, in New York City. His murder was never officially solved, though Mr. Benton suggests a solution in his book.]

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Dec. 1987: Mike Tyson: Undisputed Heavyweight King—But Is He Losing His Loyal Subjects? Color Pinup: Matthew Hilton. Interview: Barry McGuigan. Also: Aaron Pryor, Mike McCallum.

Jan. 1988: The Collapse Of A Hero: Why Breland Never Hit The Mark Of Greatness. Color Pinup: Michael Spinks. Interview: Aaron Pryor. Also: Michael Nunn, Alexis Arguello, lightweights.

Feb. 1988: Pazienza & Haugen Go For Each Other's Throats. Color Pinup: Marlon Starling. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Tate-Olajide, ESPN Boxing.

July 1988: Superfight History Dictates: Don't Expect The Expected From Tyson-Spinks. Color Pinup: Roger Mayweather. Interview: Dr. Ferdie Pacheco. Also: Roberto Duran, Azumah Nelson, Barkley-Olajide.

Aug. 1988: Tyson-Spinks: *KO's* Fearless Forecast Of Superfight '88. Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Matthew Hilton. Also: Lockridge-Knight, Evander Holyfield, Lloyd Honeyghan.

Sept. 1988: Tyson-Spinks, The Aftermath—What If Tyson Wins; What If Spinks Wins? Color Pinup: Frank Tate. Interview: Marlon Starling. Also: Barry McGuigan, Simon Brown, risk-taking.

Oct. 1988: Middleweight Terrorism: Iran Bombs The Hit Man. Color Pinup: Don Lalonde. Interview: Frank Bruno. Also: Roger Mayweather, Marvin Hagler.

Dec. 1988: Sugar Ray's Comeback: Why? Color Pinup: Simon Brown. Interview: Kevin Rooney. Also: Michael Nunn, best fighter poll, welterweight wars.

Jan. 1989: The Troubled Times Of Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Lloyd Honeyghan. Interview: Gil Clancy. Also: Meldrick Taylor, Jeff Fenech, Boxing's Champs.

Aug. 1989: Special 100th Issue. Color Pinup: Hagler vs. Hearns. Also: The *KO* Years, 50 most influential people, '80s ratings, best of *KO* Interview, year-by-year review, Sugar Ray Robinson.

Sept. 1989: "I Beat Up Tyson Before, I'll Do It Again," by Carl Williams. Color Pinup: Michael Nunn. Also: Chavez-Mayweather, Brian Mitchell, Marv Albert.

Feb. 1990: George Foreman Risks A Multimillion-Dollar Shot At Tyson. Color Pinup: Brian Mitchell. Interview: Riddick Bowe. Also: Simon Brown, Molina-Lopez, East vs. West.

June 1990: A Sugar-Free Future? Thomas Hearns Is Looking Up. Color Pinup: Glenn McCrory. Interview: Michael Moorer. Also: Matthew Hilton, Molina-Suarez, Foreman-Cooney, Camacho-Paz.

July 1990: *KO* Interview—Sugar Ray Leonard. Color Pinup: Jorge Paez. Also: Michael Nunn, Buster Douglas, Jibaro Perez, the Olympians.

Aug. 1990: Meldrick Taylor: Brilliance In Defeat. Color Pinup: Buster Douglas. Interview: Teddy Atlas. Also: Buddy McGirt, Dokes-Ruddock, Simon Brown.

Sept. 1990: *KO* Interview—Buster Douglas. Color Pinup: Macho Camacho. Also: Thomas Hearns, Nigel Benn, Greg Haugen, Boxing Hall of Fame.

Oct. 1990: Send In The Clown: Is Jorge Paez A Phenom Or A Fraud? Color Pinup: Paul Banke. Interview: Tony Lopez. Also: Chavez-Taylor II, Jesse Benavides.

Nov. 1990: The Comeback Of Mike Tyson: A Crooked Course Straight To The Top. Color Pinup: Tony Lopez. Interview: Don Dunphy. Also: Davis-Breland, Riddick Bowe, federal commission.

Dec. 1990: The Heart Of The Matter: Who Will Survive The Holyfield-Douglas War? Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Virgil Hill. Also: Michael Carbajal, Ruelas Brothers, best fighter poll.

Jan. 1991: Macho Ado About Nothing? Why Hector Camacho Wants To Be Believed. Color Pinup: Meldrick Taylor. Interview: Irving Rudd. Also: Sugar Ray Leonard, Orlando Canizales, Vinny Pazienza.

Feb. 1991: 10 Fighters To Fear: Boxing's Most Destructive Hitters. Color Pinup: Razor Ruddock. Interview: Ray Mercer. Also: Roberto Duran, Saoul Mamby, Mills Lane, Sugar Ray Robinson.

May 1991: Ruddock Eyes The Big Upset Of Tyson. Color Pinup: Luisito Espinosa. Interview: Jeff Fenech. Also: Virgil Hill, Pernell Whitaker, Alex Ramos, Simon Brown, Buddy McGirt.

June 1991: Exclusive *KO* Interview: Evander Holyfield. Color Pinup: Raul Perez. Also: Norris-Leonard, Charles Williams, champs of 1971 vs. 1991, J.C. Chavez.

July 1991: Riddick Bowe: Is He Destined To Be Heavyweight Champ? Color Pinup: Michael Carbajal. Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Bobby Czyz, Buster Douglas, Mark Breland.

Aug. 1991: Desert Storm II: Will The Tyson-Ruddock Rematch Be Different? Color Pinup: Loreto Garza. Interview: Michael Carbajal. Also: Brown-Blocker, Fenech-Nelson preview, Harold Brazier, Yuh-Carbajal.

Sept. 1991: Remember Me? I Won The Fight! What "The Real Deal" Still Has To Deal With. Color Pinup: Ray Mercer. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Larry Holmes, southpaw heavyweights, Toney-Nunn, Brown-Taylor.

Oct. 1991: Thomas Hearns Works Another Miracle! Now There Are More Hills Left To Climb. Color Pinup: Humberto Gonzalez. Interview: Mike McCallum. Also: Norris-Curry, Richard Steele, Troy Dorsey.

Dec. 1991: Tyson vs. Holyfield—The Experts Analyze The Elements That Will Decide The Fight. Color Pinup: Joey Gamache. Also: Michael Moorer, Pernell Whitaker, Greg Richardson, Robert Quiroga.

Jan. 1992: The Tyson-Holyfield Showdown: An Exclusive Forecast By George Foreman. Color Pinup: Myung Woo Yuh. Also: Fenech-Nelson, TV announcers, boxing's toughest men, Toney-McCallum.

March 1992: *KO* Interview Mike Tyson: An In-Depth, Toe-To-Toe Talk With Boxing's Biggest Star. Color Pinup: Michael Moorer. Also: Thomas Hearns, Tracy Patterson, Larry Holmes, best fighter poll.

May 1992: Division-By-Division Faceoffs: The Best Of '92 vs. The Best Of '67. Color Pinup: James Warring. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Tommy Morrison, Bert Cooper, Gianfranco Rosi.

June 1992: If Not Tyson Or Holyfield, Then Who? Bowe? Moorer? Ruddock? Lewis? Mercer? Color Pinup: James Toney. Interview: Shelly Finkel. Also: Scotty Olson, overrated and underrated fighters, Orlin Norris, Whitaker-Pineda.

July 1992: The Title Reign of Evander Holyfield: A Reason To Hide ... Or A Reason For Pride? Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Julian Jackson. Also: Kelley-Dorsey, Nelson-Fenech, Kennedy McKinney.

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Oct. 1992: The Olympics: Golden Memories ... And Golden Futures? Color Pinup: Reggie Johnson. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Genaro Hernandez, Terry Norris.

Nov. 1992: Foreman vs. Holmes: The Fight Evander Holyfield Should Have Prevented. Color Pinup: Iran Barkley. Interview: Joey Gamache. Also: Hector Camacho, Tracy Patterson, Rudy Zavala.

Dec. 1992: The Final Four: Ruddock vs. Lewis, Holyfield vs. Bowe. Color Pinup: Genaro Hernandez. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Also: Whitaker-Pineda, Bowe-Coetzer, Alex Stewart, Gamache-Lopez.

Jan. 1993: Holyfield vs. Bowe: Who Will Win And Why. Color Pinup: Al Cole. Interview: Vinny Pazienza. Also: James Toney, Terrence Alli, Maurice Blocker.

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March 1993: Not Just Another English Muffin: Lennox Lewis Powers His Way Toward The Title. Color Pinup: Leeonzer Barber. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Reggie Johnson, Lopez-Gamache, USA Network.

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June 1995: The Tug-Of-War Over Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Wilfredo Vasquez. Interview: Oliver McCall. Also: Alejandro Gonzalez, Alexis Arguello, Kostya Tszyu.

Sept. 1996: Tyson vs. Seldon. Don't Bet On This Fight Until You've Read This Story! Color Pinup: Arturo Gatti. Interview: Butterbean. Also: Dana Rosenblatt, '92 Olympians, McGuigan-Pedroza.

Nov. 1996 (Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Roy Jones, Roberto Duran, Joe Cortez.

Dec. 1996: Andrew Golota—Taking The Low Road to Stardom. Color Pinup: Mark Johnson. Interview: Rock Newman. Also: De La Hoya-Gonzalez, Chuck Bodak, bizarre endings, Chavez-Rosario.

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Aug. 1997: Oscar Reaches ... But Can't Grasp The Stars. Color Pinup: Nate Miller. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Norris-Trinidad preview, Hall of Fame, Angel Manfredy.

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Jan. 1998: De La Hoya Humbles The Macho Man: "Oscar's The Best I've Ever Fought." Color Pinup: William Guthrie. Interview: Mark Johnson. Also: Johnny Tapia, Pinklon Thomas, defense.

Feb. 1998: Is Lennox Lewis The World's Best Heavyweight? Color Pinup: Charles Brewer. Interview: Marc Ratner. Also: Otis Grant, Arturo Gatti.

March 1998: Evander Holyfield: For The Real

Deal, Lewis Is No Big Deal. Color Pinup: Lou Del Valle. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Also: David Izon, Meldrick Taylor, rapid weight loss.

May 1998: Living Up To The Hype: Sometimes They Do ... Sometimes They Don't. Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Best Of ... (Part III). Also: Naseem Hamed, Marty Denkin, women's boxing.

June 1998: Lewis vs. Holyfield: Why The Fight Of The Year Isn't Going To Happen. Color Pinup: Evander Holyfield. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Hector Lizarraga, pain, Head-To-Head review.

Aug. 1998: Lewis Bombs Out Briggs: Would The WBC Champ Do This To Holyfield? Color Pinup: Keith Mullings. Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Pernell Whitaker, Marco Antonio Barrera, Roberto Garcia.

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Oct. 1998: The Ultimate Fantasy Card. Color Pinup: Oscar De La Hoya. Interview: Roy Jones. Also: Brendan Ingle, NYPD boxing, prospect blueprint.

Nov. 1998 The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Reggie Johnson. Interview: Tim Austin. Also: Cesar Bazan, Spencer Oliver, Bobby Czyz.

Dec. 1998: Winning Fights Is Easier Than Winning Fans: Why Can't We Appreciate Roy Jones? Color Pinup: Tim Austin. Interview: Michael Grant. Also: Christy Martin, Ali Reform Act, one-hit wonders.

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May 1999: The Tyson Of Old ... Or Just An Old Tyson? Color Pinup: Luisito Espinosa. Interview: Fernando Vargas. Also: Antonio Diaz, Sumya Anani, standing eight-count.

June 1999: Will Tyson's Jail Time Be A Career Killer? Color Pinup: Johnny Tapia. Interview: Floyd Mayweather. Also: Roy Jones, 1999 Hall of Fame.

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Jan. 2000: Fool's Gold? Trinidad May Have Tarnished Oscar's Image Forever! Color Pinup: Paulie Ayala. Interview: Tony Ayala Jr. Also: David Reid, Johnny Nelson.

Feb. 2000: Breakout 2000: Who's Going To Lead The Way In Y2K? Color Pinup: Roy Jones. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Shane Mosley, Wise-Chavez, Iran Barkley.

March 2000: Mike Tyson: "I'm Tired Of This Crap!" So Are We, Mike! Color Pinup: Vernon Forrest. Interview: James Page. Also: Erik Morales & Naseem Hamed, Diego Corrales, women's boxing.

May 2000: Michael Grant vs. Lennox Lewis—25 Insiders Pick The Winner. Color Pinup: Paul Spadafora. Interview: Dan Goossen. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Johnny Tapia, southpaws.

June 2000: Lewis vs. Grant: Who Will Win ... And Why. Color Pinup: Vitali Klitschko. Interview: Sharmba Mitchell. Also: Shane Mosley, David Izon, 2000 Hall of Fame.

July 2000: Today's Fighters, Tomorrow's Hall Of Famers. Color Pinup: Keith Holmes. Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Zab Judah, Morales-Barrera, Wayne Braithwaite.

Aug. 2000: Mosley Prepares For Oscar: "It Will Be Like The First Round Of Hagler-Hearns." Color Pinup: Steve Johnston. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Vargas-Quartey, Thomas Hearns, Felix Trinidad, common sense vs. cowardice.

Sept. 2000: Now Vargas Is Ready For Trinidad & De La Hoya. Color Pinup: Erik Morales. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Trinidad vs. all-time greats, Thomas Hearns, common sense vs. cowardice.

Oct. 2000 (Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Floyd Mayweather. Interview: Stevie Johnston. Also: Clifford Etienne, overhyped heavyweights.

Nov. 2000: Sugar Rush! Mosley Achieves Superstardom At Oscar's Expense. Color Pinup: Lennox Lewis. Interview: Jay Larkin. Also: David Tua, Oleg Maskaev, Ben Tackie.

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Feb. 2001: Fernando Vargas' Internal Battle: If He Can't Win It, He Can't Beat Trinidad. Interview: Evander Holyfield. Also: Derrick Gainer, Roy Jones, Naseem Hamed.

April 2001: Lewis Is Too Much For Tua ... But Could Tyson Do Any Better? Interview: Max Kellerman. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Wladimir Klitschko.

June 2001: Trinidad-Jones: Superfight Or Mismatch? Interview: Virgil Hill. Also: Mayweather-Corrales, Paul Ingle, Davey Hilton, Tyson's relationship with Vargas, Judah, and Mayweather.

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Dec. 2001: Laila Ali: The Fighter, The Sex Symbol ... The Future Of Women's Boxing? Interview: Laila Ali. Also: Oscar De La Hoya, Tim Austin, Manny Pacquiao, Hector Camacho Jr.

Feb. 2002: Bernard Hopkins: "I Am The American Dream. I Am The American Story." Interview: Wladimir Klitschko. Also: Omar Sheika, Vernon Forrest, Juan Lazcano.

April 2002: After Hitting Rock Bottom ... Lennox Is Back On The Path To Greatness. Interview: Duva Boxing. Also: Zab Judah, Mike Tyson, Thomas Tate.

June 2002: Tyson vs. Lewis: 10-Page Preview & Analysis. Interview: Jameel McCline. Also: *Ali* movie, Dorin vs. Balbi & Ward vs. Leija.

Aug. 2002: Still Crazy After All These Years: Should Mike Tyson Be Allowed To Fight? Interview: Kostya Tszyu. Also: Barrera-Morales II preview, Ayala-Adams, Ricky Hatton.

Oct. 2002: Vernon Forrest vs. Shane Mosley: Two Careers On The Line! Interview: Fernando Vargas. Also: Mayweather-Castillo, Hopkins vs. all-time greats, heavyweight scrap heap.

Dec. 2002: Wladimir Klitschko: Would He Be Too Much For Lennox? Interview: Joe Calzaghe. Also: Barrera-Morales II, Evander Holyfield, Freddie Roach.

Winter 2002: A Realistic Look At Tyson's Comeback: He Can't Make History, But He Can Make Millions. Interview: Micky Ward. Also: Antonio Tarver, Antwun Echols, Acelino Freitas.

March 2003: Oscar De La Hoya—The War That Rages Within. Interview: Klitschko brothers. Also: Kassim Ouma, Eric Morel, holiday gifts.

May 2003: Danger Zone! Will Roy Jones Be Doomed By His Heavyweight Ego? Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Gatti-Ward II, Floyd Mayweather, Erik Morales.

July 2003: Boxing's Biggest X-Factor: Can Hopkins Recover From His Self-Inflicted Wounds? Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Kostya Tszyu, DaVarryl Williamson, 10 best defensive fighters.

Sept. 2003: Sugar Roy? How Jones Rates With The All-Time Greats. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Corrie Sanders, Jean-Marc Mormeck, Kermit Cintron.

Nov. 2003: De La Hoya-Mosley II: Will Three Years And Seven Pounds Make A Difference? Interview: James Toney. Also: Michael Watson, Erik Morales, Jones-Holyfield head-to-head.

Winter 2003: *KO* Interview Arturo Gatti: "Kostya Tszyu Needs Me More Than I Need Him." Also: Mayorga-Forrest II, Zab Judah, Corrales-Casamayor preview, Joe Calzaghe.

Feb. 2004: Shane Mosley: A Second Chance At Superstardom. Interview: Bernard Hopkins. Also: Laila Ali, Scott LeDoux, retirement.

April 2004: Human After All: Tarver Makes Jones Turn To Tyson. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Sharmba Mitchell, Toney-McCline preview, trash-talking.

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Feb. 2005: Exclusive KO Interview—Manny Pacquiao. Also: Kostya Tszyu, Manning Galloway, quitting, perfect heavyweight.

June 2005: Heavyweight Champ Vitali Klitschko: He's A Lot Better Than You Think! Interview: John Ruiz & Norman Stone. Also: Glen Johnson, 2004 in review.

Oct. 2005: El Feroz With A Twist: Re-tooled Vargas Gets Defensive. Interview: Zab Judah. Also: Marco Antonio Barrera, Jean-Marc Mormeck, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., *KO* at 25.

Feb. 2006: Can Hip Hop Revitalize Boxing? Interview: Erik Morales. Also: Zab Judah, Ricardo Mayorga, Arturo Gatti, Luis Collazo, Roman Karmazin.

Volume I, 2006 (KO Presents Boxing 2006): Middleweight Champ Jermain Taylor—Is The Best Yet To Come? Also: Ricky Hatton, Mosley-Vargas preview, Floyd Mayweather, Juan Manuel & Rafael Marquez, Joan Guzman, Steve Cunningham, Liston & Louis, 20 greatest Mexicans.

Volume 2, 2006 (KO Presents Boxing 2006): Pay-Per-View Showdown! Also: Cotto-Maliganaggi preview, Hopkins vs. Tarver preview, Rahman-Toney, Jhonny Gonzalez, John Duddy, Castillo-Corrales III preview, Peter Manfredo, Jeff Lacy, Arthur Abraham, 20 greatest Brits.

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Heavyweights

Oleg Maskaev KO 12
Hasim Rahman
(*Wins WBC Title*)
Evander Holyfield KO 2
Jeremy Bates
Vinnie Maddalone W 10
Jermell Barnes
Kelvin Davis KO 5 Chris Thomas
Eddie Chambers KO 5
Domonic Jenkins
Chris Arreola KO 4 Damian Norris
Malachy Farrell KO 5 Shannon Miller
Joe Mesi KO 2 Dennis Matthews
Brian Minto KO 1 Andy Sample
Alonzo Butler W 8 Maurice Wheeler
Damian Wills W 8 Cisse Salif

Cruiserweights

Pavol Polakovic W 12 Fabio Tuiach
Patrick Nwamu KO 3 John Battle

Light Heavyweights

John Vargas W 8 Aneudi Santos
Anthony Russell KO 3 Don Labbe

Super Middleweights

Ruben Acosta W 12
Nestor Casanova
Joey Gilbert KO 1 Jason Aaker
Jaidon Codrington W 6 Carl Daniels

Middleweights

Enrique Ornelas KO 1 Raul Munoz
Dante Craig D 10 Cleiton Conceicao
Jose Luis Zertuche KO 8
Carlos Bojorquez
Marcos Vergara KO 1
Jose Rodrigues

Junior Middleweights

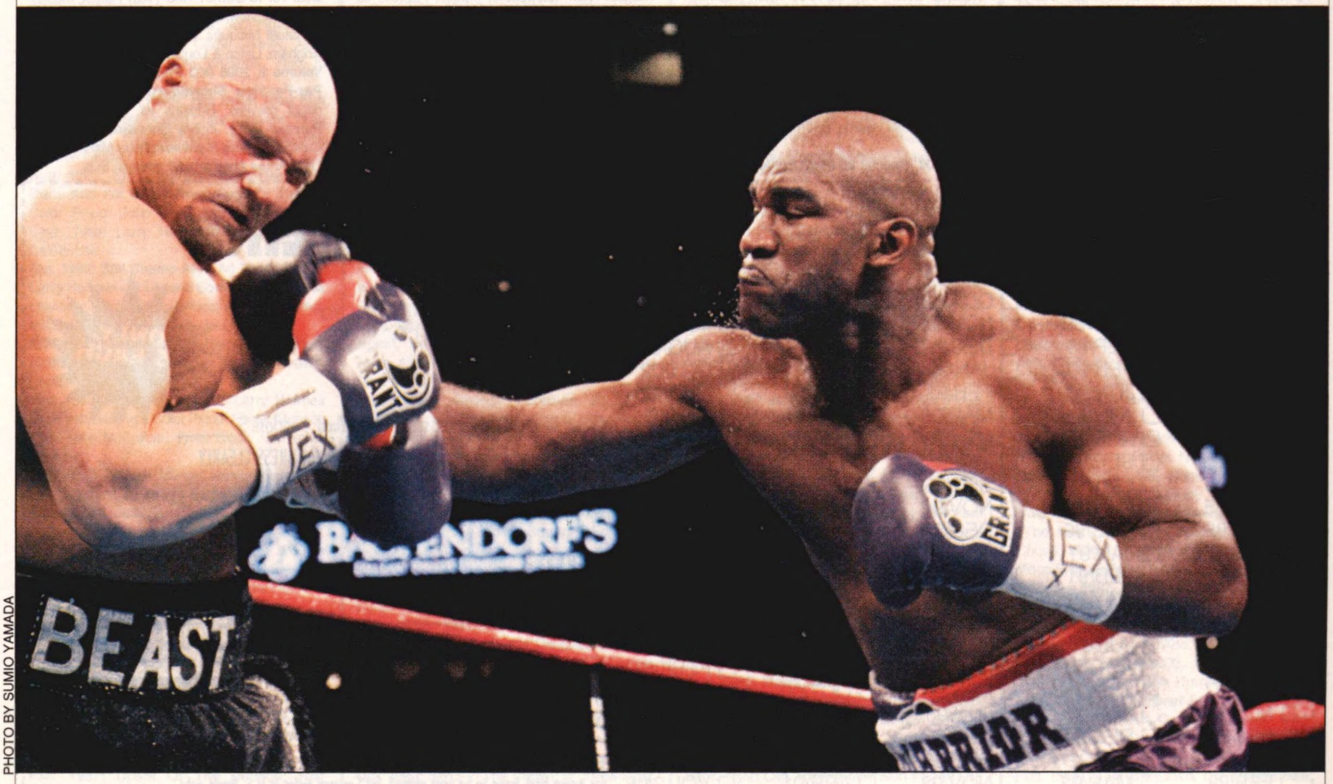
Verno Phillips KO 12 Teddy Reid
Vernon Forrest W 10 Ike Quartey
Kassim Ouma W 10 Sechew Powell
Roberto Reuque W 10 Juan Meza
Adam Vella W 10 Nonoy Gonzales
Michael Stewart KO 4 Ebo Elder
Clarence Taylor W 8 Jose Medina
Grady Brewer W 5 Vinroy Barrett
Vanes Martirosyan W 6
Marcus Brooks

Welterweights

Paul Williams KO 4
Sharmba Mitchell
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. KO 4
Jermaine White
Julio Cesar Garcia KO 2
Alfonso Sanchez
Andrew Farmer KO 1 Grant Messer
Tomohiro Mitsunaga KO 3
Arnu Jannafai
Said Ouali KO 9 Xavier Tolliver
Andre Berto KO 1
Roberto Valenzuela
Gabriel Martinez KO 1
Rodrigo Villalba
Ushiwakamaru Akibei KO 1
Yun Woo Chun
Edwin Vazquez W 8 Jose Torres

Junior Welterweights

Samuel Malinga KO 12
Lawrence Ngobeni
Jose Cotto W 10 Ivan Hernandez
Ryota Uchiyama W 10
Yoshinari Hayamizu



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Heavyweight Holyfield slams Bates with a right

Ricardo Dominguez KO 7
Jorge Pimentel
Jungbum Kim KO 7
Daigoro Yamamoto
Justo Sencion KO 1 Tony Black
Javier Castro KO 2 Ismael Gonzalez
Bobby Aucoin KO 3 Tyrone Wiggins
Verquan Kimbrough W 4
Marty Robbins

Lightweights

David Diaz KO 12 Jose Santa Cruz
Edner Cherry KO 12 Daniel Alicea
Derrick Gainer W 12 Phillip Payne
Peter Semo W 12 Patrick Musana
Keita Manabe KO 10 Takuya Suzuki
Ameth Diaz KO 2
Diomedes Miranda
Jorge Paez Jr. W 6 Armand Horn

Junior Lightweights

Edwin Valero KO 10
Vicente Mosquera
(*Wins WBA Title*)
Thong Por Chokchai W 12
Jaime Barcelona
Guadalupe Rosales W 12
Zid Zavaleta
Humberto Soto KO 4 Ivan Valle
Israel Perez KO 2 Sergio Ledesma
Monty Meza Clay KO 6 Dean White
Koseki Onaga KO 4
Klaabdaeng Kiatkririnthr

Featherweights

Juan Manuel Marquez KO 7
Terdsak Jandaeng
Miguel Roman W 10 Cesar Soto
Emmanuel Lucero KO 4
Reggie Sanders
Rogers Mtagwa KO 4 Alvin Brown
Ricardo Castillo KO 5 Jesus Garcia
Tomas Villa KO 3
Miguel Escamilla
Ken Mitsuyama KO 5
Ritthidej Soonkilanoynai
Orlando Salido KO 1
Franner Trinidad
Mario Santiago KO 4
Andres Ledesma

Junior Featherweight

Oscar Chauke KO 10
Mzikayise Mchasi
Moises Zamudio W 10
Gilberto Bolanos

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Lightweight Paez Jr. drops Horn in the corner

Jose Arboleda W 10
Hevinson Herrera
Napapol Kiattisakchokchai KO 3
Hussein Pazzi
Jose Francisco Mendoza KO 2
Rafael Castillo
Mikihito Setoh KO 1
Teerawat Songkarak
Diosdado Gabi KO 1
Mauricio Pastrana
Jorge Lacierva KO 5 Jose Beranza
Hiromasa Ohashi KO 3
Pongsak Pongcharoen

Bantamweights

Rafael Marquez KO 9
Silence Mabuza
(*Retains IBF Title*)
Alejandro Valdez W 12
Adonis Reynaldo
Veeraphol Sahaprom KO 3
Pascal Mhagama
Ratanachai Sor Vorapin KO 4
Johnny Lear
Francisco Arce KO 7
Alejandro Moreno
Anselmo Moreno KO 5 Jose Lopez
Ricardo Arredondo Jr. KO 1
Juventino Delgado

Junior Bantamweights

Yusuke Morishima W 10
Shinnosuke Yasuda
Teppei Kikui W 10
Masayuki Arinaga
Daiki Kameda KO 1 Wido Paez
Norio Kimura KO 7 Feigong Kogure
Kuniyuki Aizawa KO 3
Uchi Eausamphan

Flyweights

Omar Narvaez W 12 Rexon Flores
Jose Lopez W 10 Kermin Guardia
Francisco Arce KO 4 Jesus Jimenez
Moruti Mthalane KO 6 Akhona Aliva
Go Onaga Tech. Win 5
Nerys Espinoza
Hernan Marquez KO 2 Diego Munoz

Junior Flyweights

Koki Kameda W 12 Juan Landaeta
(*Wins Vacant WBA Title*)
Omar Nino W 12 Brian Viloria
(*Wins WBC Title*)
Jose Aguirre W 12 Francisco Soto
Ulises Solis D 12 Omar Salado
Omar Soto KO 3 Luis Ramos
Shigetaka Ikehara KO 3
Thongthailek Vorasing
Tsutomu Yamanaka W 8
Yoshihiro Hisada
Shingo Yamaguchi W 8
Kosuke Takechi

Strawweights

Donnie Nietes W 10 Robert Rubillar
Teruo Misawa D 10
Satoshi Kogumazaka
Tomoaki Handa KO 2
Dechsuk Sithsaithong
Rollen Del Castillo KO 3
Nelson Guindolan

Rafael Marquez KO 9 Silence Mabuza

Stateline, Nevada: Having fought his entire 11-year career at 118 pounds, 31-year-old Marquez, Mexico City, Mexico, announced before his fight with Johannesburg, South Africa's Mabuza that it was time to close the book on his bantamweight career.

Determined to prove that his November 5, 2005, four-round TKO over Mabuza had more to do with his power than with a headbutt, Marquez, 118, started strong and finished stronger against Mabuza, 117½, whom he punished over the last two rounds on the way to a ninth-round TKO in front of 3,500 fans at MontBleu Outdoor Sports Pavilion (formerly Caesars Tahoe). Nic Durandt, Mabuza's trainer, mercifully pulled the plug on the fight before the bell rang for the 10th round.

At the time of the stoppage, all three judges had Marquez in front; Adelaide Byrd (USA) and Glenn Feldman (USA) saw it 88-83, while Burt Clements (USA) had it 87-83. THE RING saw it 87-84 in favor of Marquez, who took home $140,000 for the win. For Marquez, 36-3 (32), it was the seventh and probably last defense of the IBF bantamweight belt that he took from Tim Austin via eighth-round TKO on February 15, 2003.

Marquez got off to a promising start behind an ever-improving left jab—one stiff jab even wobbled Mabuza in the first round. Marquez dropped Mabuza to his knees with a low blow in round two and drew a warning from referee Tony Weeks (USA), then suddenly found himself flat-footed and out of range. Mabuza, 19-2 (15), began to mix some clever footwork with a good jab and some solid left hooks and right hands and appeared to take the third, fourth, and fifth rounds.

Marquez was not to be denied, however, and after Mabuza drew a warning from Weeks for a low blow of his own, Marquez quickly closed the distance between him and his dancing opponent and unleashed a series of jarring left hooks and left uppercuts in the sixth. The 28-year-old Mabuza tried to return fire with the more powerful Marquez and, after absorbing another powerful left hook, traded with his opponent at the bell ending the sixth round.

Marquez blasted Mabuza with a nice combination at the halfway point of round seven, rocked "African Spice" with a right in the eighth, and staggered the bloody challenger at the end of the round.

Leaking from a pair of cuts under his left eye and a laceration around his right eye, not to mention dripping blood from his nose, Mabuza took a wicked beating in the ninth. After the round, Mabuza's corner threw in the towel.

"He's a great fighter," Marquez said of Mabuza, who took home $50,000. "He has a great punch. But I got my second wind. My conditioning is my strength. The last fight ended with talk of a headbutt. I wanted to show I can beat him."

Marquez, who has added some sweet boxing skills to go with his prodigious punch, will now try to open a new chapter in his career.

"There are some great champions at 122 pounds," Marquez said. "I want to fight those champions there."

Television: **Showtime**
Promoter: **Gary Shaw Productions**
(8-5-06)
Mike Houser

PHOTO BY CHAD LUNDQUIST

Marquez clips Mabuza with a right

Juan Manuel Marquez KO 7 Terdsak Jandaeng

Stateline, Nevada: Whether it was futilely chasing down former featherweight titlist Naseem Hamed, dealing with promoter Top Rank, getting the shaft from the IBF and WBA sanctioning bodies—which stripped the unified featherweight titlist of his belts—or losing a controversial decision to Chris John in Indonesia, nothing has come easy for the 32-year-old Marquez.

And even though he twice knocked down the 25-year-old Terdsak, Bangkok, Thailand, was the beneficiary of a point deduction because of a third-round low blow from Terdsak, and ultimately stopped his opponent at 1:13 of round seven to win the oh-so-important vacant WBO interim featherweight strap in front of 3,500 fans at the MontBleu Outdoor Sports Pavilion, the victory didn't come easily for Marquez.

With promoter Gary Shaw courting

Marquez, who is hoping for a rematch with Manny Pacquiao and fights with Erik Morales and Marco Antonio Barrera, the classy Mexican had to first rid himself of Terdsak, 24-2 (15), who was in his face from the opening bell. Nicknamed "Pit Bull," Terdsak, 125, couldn't match the skills of Marquez, 124½, Mexico City, but did have the heart and toughness to put him to the test.

Coming off a questionable loss to the undefeated John—for which he earned a meager $30,000 after rejecting $700,000 to fight Pacquiao a second time—Marquez was able to come out in the first round and land strong right crosses to the head and left hooks to the body of Terdsak, who responded with equally impressive left crosses.

In the second round, Marquez, who earned $140,000 for this fight, homed in with a right uppercut. A flurry of rights and lefts preceded a huge left uppercut, which dropped Terdsak onto his face. But the gutsy brawler beat the count at the bell.

Terdsak tried to turn up the heat in round three, but referee Jay Nady (USA) penalized him a point the second time he strayed too far south. Terdsak enjoyed his best round in the fourth, and Marquez' right eye, which showed swelling at the end of the third round, began to close rapidly thanks to Terdsak's lefts.

Marquez dominated the fifth with a complete assortment

PHOTO BY CHAD LUNDQUIST

Jandaeng absorbs a right uppercut from Marquez

[THE RING Fighter of the Month] Presented by EVERLAST

Edwin Valero

If Edwin Valero had turned out to be a product of pure hype, he would hardly have been the first boxer of whom that was true. Every couple of years, a new undefeated sensation comes along and gets labeled by a handful of insiders as the next big thing. Just a couple of months ago, welterweight Joel Julio proved unworthy of that buildup when he was soundly defeated in his first serious test. As Valero prepared for *his* major step up against Vicente Mosquera, the possibility that he, like Julio, would be exposed and defeated was undeniably present.

But even against Mosquera, in a challenge for a 130-pound title, Valero did just what he's done against everybody else: win by knockout. This was a lot harder than every other kayo on the Venezuelan's resume, since it was the first one that didn't come in either the first or second round, but ultimately, the powerpunching phenom proved dominant—and worthy of the hype. Valero, who has never fought on American television and isn't even allowed to fight on U.S. soil due to brain injuries discovered on an MRI a few years ago, had grown into something of a myth due to his astounding record and some flattering word-of-mouth.

Now we know he's not just a myth. But he may not be a mere mortal either.

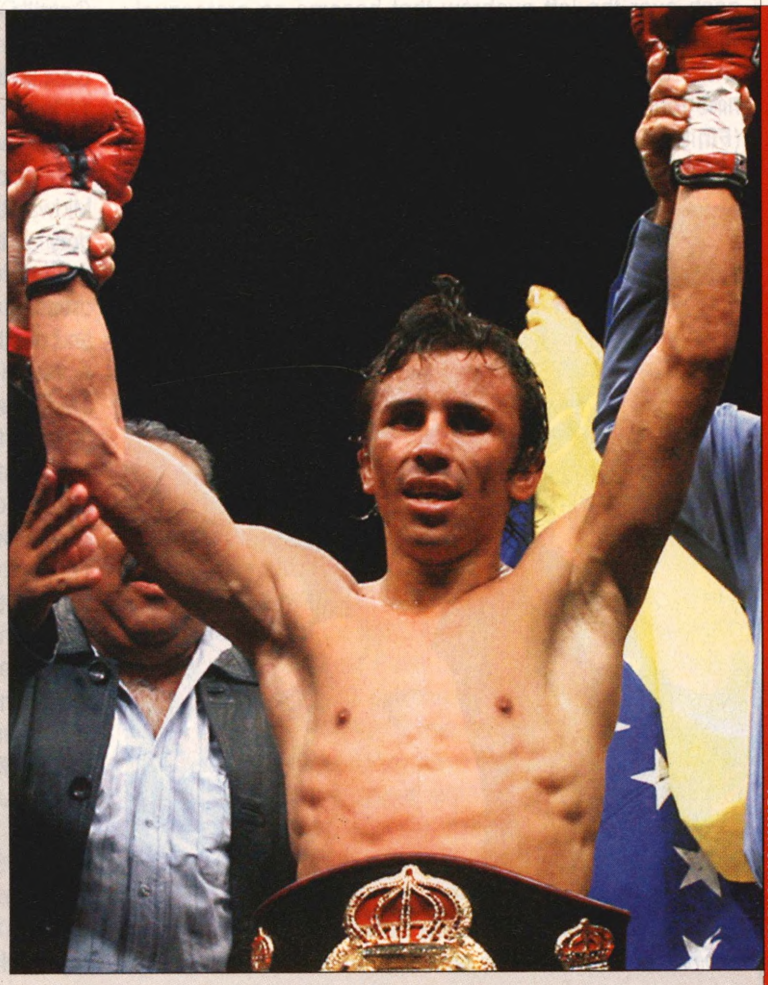

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

of punches, and another right uppercut followed by an overhand right put Terdsak on his back for a seven-count in the sixth. Terdsak fought back in the seventh, but Marquez turned on the afterburners and Nady waved it off following a pair of sequences where Marquez landed every punch in his repertoire to the head and body of the determined Terdsak.

All three American judges—Duane Ford (59-51), Michael Pernick (59-52), and Doug Tucker (60-51)—had Marquez, 45-3-1 (34), way in front. THE RING had it 60-52.

"I tried my best, but Marquez is very smart and very quick," said Terdsak, who earned $60,000.

As of press time, Shaw, who promotes Juan Manuel's brother, Rafael, was still wooing Marquez, who said he would face anybody at 126 or 130 pounds. According to the WBO's plans, he is to face WBO titlist Scott Harrison—who is in rehab—within four months.

Television: **Showtime**
Promoter: **Gary Shaw Productions**
(8-5-06)
Mike Houser

Nobuo Nashiro KO 10 Martin Castillo

Osaka, Japan: Unbeaten but highly inexperienced challenger Nashiro, 115, Japan, a veteran of only seven previous pro fights, amazingly captured the WBA 115-pound belt as he kept stalking Castillo, 115, Mexico, and opened a gash over the left eyebrow that became so grotesquely wide and deep that referee Rafael Perez Pineda (Panama) finally declared a halt at 1:02 of the 10th round. Through nine rounds, the fight was dead even, with Erkki Meronen (Finland) having Nashiro ahead 87-85, Derek Milham (Australia) seeing it 87-85 for Castillo, and Guy Jutras (Canada) scoring it 86-86. The victory for Nashiro makes him Japan's sixth current major alphabet titleholder.

PHOTO BY JIJI PRESS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Nashiro fires a right en route to upset over Castillo

Nashiro, 24, got off to a good start, landing solid left-right combinations and grabbing the early edge in the initial session. The 29-yer-old Castillo, however, exploded with a well-timed left hook to his aggressive opponent's head, and Nashiro almost sagged to his knees before the bell came to his rescue. Once judge scored the round for Nashiro, one scored it for Castillo, and one scored it even.

The left hook didn't discourage Nashiro, though, and he remained the aggressor. Castillo, making his fifth defense, kept moving to and fro and attempted to counter the willing mixer with his favorite combination, the left hook followed by the short right. But late in the second round, the Mexican sustained a cut over the left eyebrow, caused by a Nashiro punch. Cutman Miguel Diaz stopped the bleeding for a while, but Nashiro repeatedly landed effective straight rights to get the blood streaming.

Nashiro continued to do good work from the third through sixth rounds as he kept stalking the moving target and landed good left-right combos with precision. Castillo's laceration stopped bleeding at the beginning of every round, but he returned to his corner each time with the face covered in crimson. Nashiro was at his best in round six, when he often caught the fading titleholder with solid one-two combinations and had him staggering. In the eighth, Castillo cleverly threw sharp combos to the onrushing Nashiro. But as in the previous rounds, when the bell rang, Castillo had blood streaming down his face.

In the ninth, Castillo's laceration looked significantly worsened. The ref told the Mexican's corner after the ninth that he would stop the proceedings unless the cut stopped bleeding. Midway through the 10th, Pineda decided to call a halt to the gory affair. Castillo, 30-2 (16), made no complaint regarding the referee's stoppage. A trip by this reporter to Castillo's dressing room afterward helped explain why, as the width and depth of the laceration was truly stunning.

Nashiro, 8-0 (5), is a university graduate with a mediocre amateur mark of 38-19. He is not so fast, but good at hitting the target with precision. And he has obviously made rapid progress since turning professional. He upset Hidenobu Honda by a unanimous decision in August 2004, then wrested the national super fly belt from Seiji Tanaka. Nashiro then scored a unanimous nod over WBA number-two ranked Prosper Matsuura in an eliminator to decide the mandatory challenger last November.

By beating Castillo, Nashiro tied the Japanese record for seizing a major belt in the least amount of fights, equaling the mark of eight set by Joichiro Tatsuyoshi.

Promoters: **Mutoh Promotions, Teiken Promotions**
(7-22-06)
Joe Koizumi

Vernon Forrest W 10 Ike Quartey

New York, New York: It would have been easy to approach this fight thinking, *Boy, wouldn't it have been*

great if Quartey and Forrest met in their respective primes?

But Quartey, 36, and Forrest, 35, did not disappoint, regardless of whether they might have been able to perform at a higher level five or 10 years ago. This was a good boxing match between two consummate pros at The Theater at Madison Square Garden, and the two former welterweight titleholders approached the bout fully aware the future was on the line. And although Forrest won a disputed 10-round unanimous decision, it was clear that both men still have a future in boxing.

It was a fight in which neither man was able to impose his will and style on the fight. Both tried. Quartey pressed the fight, moving forward behind his stiff left jab, and Forrest countered, at times brilliantly. Forrest also scored with some wrenching left hooks to the body. The scoring was difficult because, while the action was continuous, no one reeled off a succession of victorious rounds.

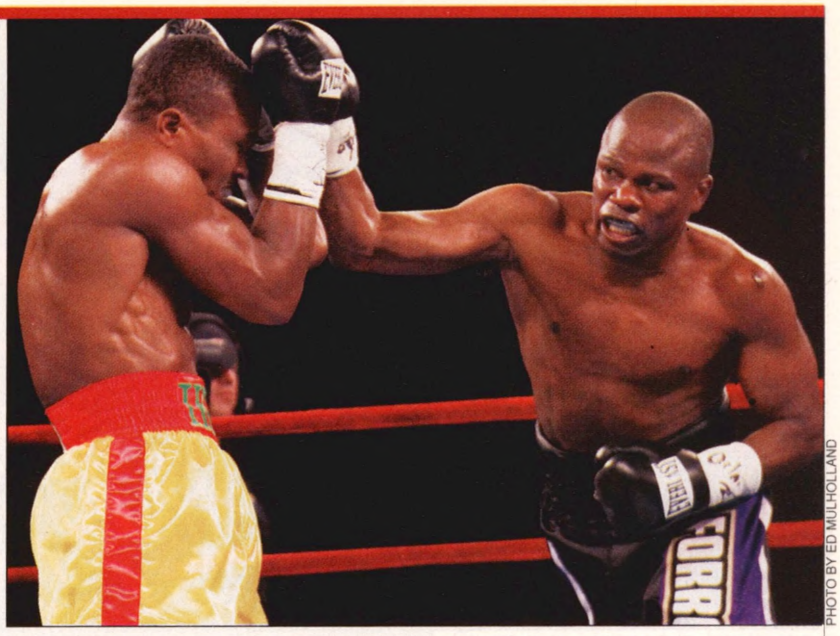

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Forrest takes unpopular verdict over Quartey

Forrest, 153½, Atlanta, Georgia, was awarded a unanimous decision. Judges Melvina Lathan (USA) and Steve Weisfeld (USA) scored the bout 95-94, and Tony Paolillo had it 96-93. THE RING saw it 96-94 for Forrest. Quartey, 154, Accra, Ghana, was visibly upset once the decision was announced. And so were many in the mostly pro-Quartey crowd. They chanted, "Bulls___, Bulls___" after the verdict was announced.

"I won the fight easily," said Quartey. "They all saw the fight. The fans are disappointed."

While Quartey marched forward throughout the fight, it was Forrest who seemed to land the most telling blows. Beset by injuries to his left shoulder and arm, Forrest did not display the same snapping left jab that once helped him win the title, but his left hook was a potent weapon throughout the bout, digging it to the body often. And in round three, he stunned Quartey with a right uppercut.

It was Quartey's jab that dictated the rounds that the Ghanian fighter won. That punch has long been his calling card and this fight was no different. But it wasn't enough.

"He's a one-handed fighter," said Forrest. "His jab is his best punch, and I took his best punch."

In the ninth round, Forrest was penalized a point by referee Arthur Mercante Jr. (USA) for hitting low, but since all three judges had given him the round, it didn't turn out to be a two-point advantage for Quartey. All three judges gave the 10th round to Quartey, 37-3-1 (31), but it was apparently too little, too late.

"I thought I won the fight," said Forrest, 38-2 (28). "I did what I had to do to win the fight."

The winner inserted himself into the conversation for major fights at junior middleweight. But the reality is, off this fight, either Forrest or Quartey would make a worthy opponent for any of the top 154-pounders.

Television: **HBO**
Promoter: **DiBella Entertainment**
(8-5-06)
Robert Cassidy

Kassim Ouma W 10 Sechew Powell

New York, New York: In the days leading up to Ouma's fight against Powell at The Theater at Madison Square Garden, Ouma's manager, Tom Moran, was projecting on the possible opponents against whom his fighter could be matched. The weight ranged from 147 pounds to 160 and the names went something like this: Floyd Mayweather, Oscar De La Hoya, and Jermain Taylor.

This was prefaced by Moran saying, "Kassim is looking for major fights. And if he really belongs in those kind of fights, which I believe he does, then he has to beat a fighter like Sechew Powell."

Ouma affirmed his manager's belief with a resounding, 10-round unanimous decision over the previously unbeaten Powell. Perhaps even more impressive was that he did it in the New Yorker's backyard.

It was a typical Ouma performance, one in which he outhustled, outworked, and outmaneuvered his opponent over the course of the fight. According to CompuBox statistics, Ouma, 153, West Palm Beach, Florida, via Kampala, Uganda, threw 1,043 punches and landed 380. Powell, 155, Brooklyn, New York, tossed 835 blows and landed 319. And while Powell may have landed a greater percentage, it was Ouma's sheer work rate that earned him a unanimous decision with the three American judges. Dick Flaherty had it 100-90, Steve Weisfeld scored it 97-93, and Tony Paolillo's card read 96-94. THE RING scored the bout 97-93 for Ouma.

As much as Ouma, 27, was fighting to preserve his

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Ouma (right) was too busy for previously unbeaten Powell

position as a marquee attraction, Powell was hoping to leap to the top of the junior middleweight ratings. But the step up in opposition proved to be too much. His best wins to date were against Robert Frazier, Archak Ter-Meliksetian, and Grady Brewer (controversially), none of which could prepare him for the former IBF junior middleweight titleholder's continual assault. Powell, 27, fought well in spurts. He certainly landed the harder punches, often digging in and delivering blistering right-left combinations. But the spurts were too few and far between and Powell, 20-1 (12), spent too much of the fight backing up. The punches he did land had little effect on the iron-chinned Ouma, 25-2-1 (15).

The southpaws tangled feet a few times, but Ouma's steady pressure assured that there were few awkward moments for the dueling lefties. In the end, it was a typical Ouma win, one in which his opponent was left standing, but was clearly overwhelmed.

The referee was Eddie Claudio (USA).

Television: **HBO**
Promoter: **DiBella Entertainment**
(8-5-06)
Robert Cassidy

Edwin Valero KO 10 Vicente Mosquera

Panama City, Panama: This bout was headline news throughout the region as 26-year-old hometown titleholder Mosquera was defending the WBA 130-pound belt against one of the most hyped young fighters in the world: Venezuelan mandatory challenger Valero, who came into the bout with a perfect 19-0 (19) record compiled over just 20 professional rounds. Valero's first 18 wins came in the first round, and in his last fight prior to this challenge, he scored a second-round kayo.

To top it all off, Valero had sustained permanent brain injuries in a motorcycle accident in 2001 prior to turning professional and was suspended from fighting in the United States when an MRI revealed the injury in 2003. Despite the roadblock, Valero took fights in Europe, Latin America, and Asia. Though he didn't fight any top opponents, the Venezuela-based WBA saw fit to make their native son the number-one contender, setting up the bout with "El Loco."

The fight ended up being a thriller, with both participants hitting the canvas to delight the sold-out crowd of 4,100 at the Figali Convention Center. Valero, 129¾, came out swinging in the first and had the Panamanian down twice and almost out, but spurred on by his countrymen's chants of "Loco," Mosquera, 130, courageously stormed forward. In the second, the two fighters started to trade. Mosquera stalked Valero and began to land his straight rights—until Valero stunned him and forced him to go back against the ropes.

In the third—a round Valero had never seen before—Valero appeared shaken and a bit winded. Midway through, Mosquera put "El Inca" down for a short count, but Valero came back and was fighting on even terms with the determined titleholder by the round's end. In the fourth round, after hearing his trainers' pleas of "Just box, just box him," Valero seemed to reassert himself from the outside and took command with his right jab. Late in the round, however, Mosquera regained control and the crowd went wild.

In the fifth, Mosquera hit Valero below the belt and referee Luis Pabon (Panama) gave Valero time to recover. These few seconds seemed to be precious in reinvigorating the hard-punching dynamo. In the sixth, southpaw Valero reasserted his dominance and bounced lefts off the head of Mosquera. The 24-year-old challenger continued to dominate in the seventh and stunned Mosquera, but the Venezuelan seemed to be tiring again and, by the round's end, Mosquera was backing him up.

It was a seesaw battle all the way, and even though Valero was obviously ahead on points, there was a feeling in the arena that the Panamanian could still come out victorious. But starting in the eighth round, Valero asserted his dominance for good. He outboxed Mosquera, 24-2-1 (12), from the outside and bounced powerful shots off of his head. This continued throughout the eighth, ninth, and into the 10th, until the Panamanian's trainer, Francisco Arroyo, jumped into the ring to save the valiant beltholder from any more punishment, forcing the stoppage at 2:00 of the 10th.

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Kayo artist Valero rakes Mosquera with a left

Even though Valero, 20-0 (20), is still raw and uses his jab more as a range finder than a weapon, he's probably the most prolific puncher the division has seen since the days of Alexis Arguello. After the fight, Valero stated, "I want to have a couple of fights in Las Vegas, then I want Manny Pacquiao. I want to unify the titles at 130 pounds. This victory was so gratifying because of all the obstacles I had to overcome to get here. Plus, I was happy about the fact that I got to show all the critics that I could fight past the first couple of rounds!"

Promoter: **Istmo Promotions and Events**

(8-5-06)

Brent Matteo Alderson

Javier Castillejo KO 10 Felix Sturm

Hamburg, Germany: Over 13 years had gone by since Castillejo, 158¾, Madrid, Spain, first challenged for an alphabet title, the WBA 154-pound belt then held by rugged Argentine Julio Cesar Vasquez, and it had been seven years since he won the WBC super welterweight title from American Keith Mullings. It took Oscar De La Hoya 12 rounds to beat Sturm and wrest the belt away, but that was five years ago. At 27, Sturm, 160, Hamburg, Germany, who was considered by many to be unlucky to drop a decision to De La Hoya in 2004, was the coming man. But age and form were no barriers to the 38-year-old Spaniard, who pressured Sturm throughout before stopping him with a furious assault in the 10th round to claim the WBA middleweight strap at the Color Line Arena. It was Sturm's first defense.

From the outset, the German appeared to be wary of his vastly experienced adversary, despite being a solid favorite to win. His game plan, clearly, was to hit and run, utilize his jab, and stay out of harm's way, but Castillejo, 61-6 (40), was relentless in trying to draw him into a fight. On the inside, he outworked Sturm, 25-2 (11), landing hooks and uppercuts, and generally his idea was to intimidate and inflict as much damage as he could to slow down the German. In the second round, the challenger launched a series of rights and lefts that landed mostly on the gloves, but Sturm was stopped in his tracks nonetheless and, finally, two left hooks penetrated his guard and sent him to the canvas, visibly in shock. He beat the count of American referee Mark Nelson, but only after stumbling, and was then subjected to a barrage of blows from the charged-up challenger. Somehow Sturm weathered the storm, even hitting back with a left uppercut and left cross before the bell, but no longer was it a straightforward title defense.

As he had in his previous bout, Sturm became cautious and over-reliant on lateral movement and a jab that simply could not keep Castillejo at bay. Furthermore, he was tiring himself out while his challenger remained strong and ambitious, still firing the left hook, his most potent punch. On points, Sturm had established a sizable lead, but his heavy breathing in the corner between rounds spoke more about

PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Castillejo celebrates as the ref rescues Sturm

the way this fight was headed.

By the 10th, Sturm was exhausted. Castillejo sensed that his moment had arrived and upped the pace again, successfully cornering Sturm and punishing him. The younger man still had some fight in him and managed to drive the Spaniard back, but with a minute remaining, Castillejo landed a perfect left hook that sent Sturm reeling. He stayed upright, but Castillejo connected with three more left uppercuts and Sturm had nothing left, referee Nelson stepping in at 2:47 of the round.

"This is a great moment for me, but I never stopped believing and that's why I was able to come into this fight ready to produce a winning performance," said Castillejo, who may give Sturm a rematch as Peter Kohl, the promoter, has options on his next three fights. Devastated, Sturm kissed goodbye to a lucrative unification bout with Arthur Abraham, for the time being at least, but the long-term doubt now will be if he can ever come back to look like the fighter who handled De La Hoya so well. He did not look so clever against Castillejo.

Promoter: **Universum-Box**
(7-15-06)
Brian Doogan

Wladimir Sidorenko W 12 Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym

Hamburg, Germany: With calm assurance and the sound boxing skills that are beginning to mark him as a noteworthy titleholder, Sidorenko, 117¾, Hamburg, Germany, via Energodar, Ukraine, retained the WBA bantamweight belt by unanimous decision at the Color Line Arena, outboxing Poonsawat, 118, Sakolnakorn, Thailand, who—farcically—had held the WBA's interim title after decisioning Ricardo Cordoba last year. This was Sidorenko's third defense of the belt he won from Julio Zarate last year.

Sidorenko's struggles with Cordoba in March this year—he retained his title but could only manage a draw against the Panamanian southpaw—gave the traveling Thai plenty of hope, even though his own win over Cordoba was widely disputed. He believed that his harder punch would overwhelm Sidorenko, 20-0 (6), at some point. His only concern was that for the first time he would be boxing outside of Thailand in his opponent's adopted hometown.

"I know fighting him in his home won't be easy. This is why I want to knock him out, so there's no chance of the fight being decided by the judges," he said.

But Sidorenko rarely gave Poonsawat, 24-1 (15), the chance to demonstrate his power. From the opening bell, he moved with an acrobat's efficiency, utilized his jab, and demonstrated the ring generalship that made him an Olympic bronze medalist and a European champion as an amateur. Poonsawat, 25, rarely orchestrated the opportunities he desired to get in close and unload and, like many before him, found it difficult to seize the initiative from the 29-year-old Ukrainian.

As the bout moved into the latter half, Sidorenko was well in control and the Thai became increasingly frustrated at his lack of success. It became clear that only a stoppage could prevent him from experiencing defeat for the first time, but he was unable to catch Sidorenko as he had believed he would, and at the final bell, the look of resignation on his face told the story.

Mikael Hook (Sweden) scored 120-108, but the other judges, who also scored for Sidorenko, had it closer: Levi Martinez (USA) 116-112 and Takeshi Shimakawa (Japan) 115-113. THE RING saw it 117-111 for Sidorenko. The referee was Rafael Ramos (USA).

Promoter: **Universum-Box**
(7-15-06)
Brian Doogan

Rudy Lopez KO 7 Takashi Koshimoto

Fukuoka, Japan: Mexican challenger Lopez, 126, impressively captured the WBC featherweight belt as he kept busily punching and stalking lefty titlist Koshimoto, 126, and finally brought him to a standstill to prompt the referee's intervention at 2:49 of the seventh round. After the third man called a halt, Koshimoto collapsed and had to be carried out of the ring on a stretcher. Thankfully, the Japanese veteran does not appear to have suffered any serious damage.

The official tallies through six were identical in every round, with Ed Kugler (USA), Jack Woodburn (Canada), and Larry O'Connell (England) all having the bout even at 57-57. The referee was Ian John Lewis (England).

It looked like it might be an easy night for Koshimoto after the tall southpaw dominated the opening session, and

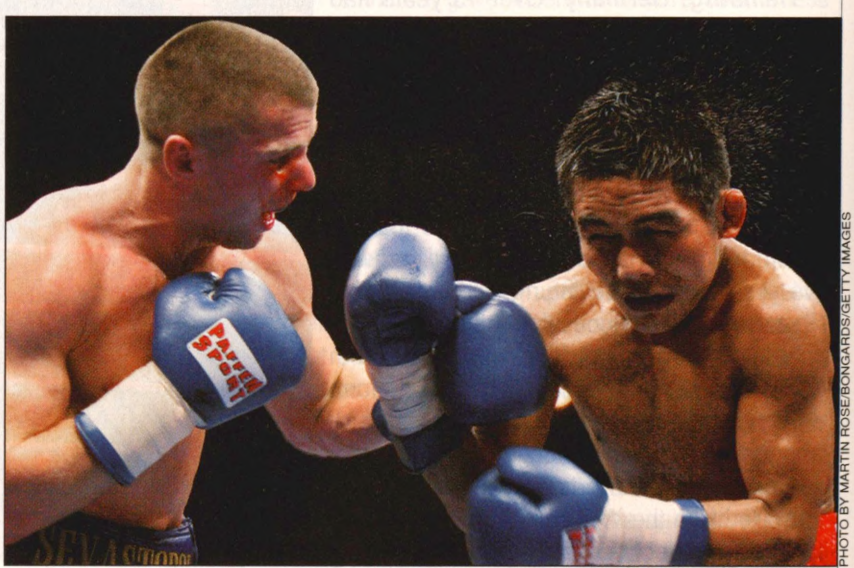

PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/BONGARDS/GETTY IMAGES

Sidorenko jolts Poonsawat with a left hook

Lopez, 13 years his junior at 22, looked green. The challenger threw pitty-pat punches ineffectively, while Koshimoto tossed more effective blows.

But Lopez swung things in his favor in the second session. The handsome Mexican incessantly kept throwing punches in bunches, turning from orthodox to southpaw and remaining aggressive even in the face of struggling to connect accurately with the elusive Koshimoto. The Mexican sustained a cut under the right eye during the round, but it was difficult to tell if it was caused by a legal shot or by an accidental butt.

Koshimoto's defense and counter left hands carried the third, but the fourth was all Lopez, who kept throwing punches for the full three minutes, while Koshimoto was too busy blocking and trying to slip shots to retaliate. The fifth followed a similar pattern, as Lopez kept punching all the way, but never showed any sign of fatigue. Some ringsiders expected Lopez to run out of gas, but the Mexican kid had abundant stamina with which he could continue punching all night.

PHOTO BY JIJI PRESS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Lopez rams a right into the side of Koshimoto's face

Koshimoto found his zone in the sixth, when he connected with accurate counters against the onrushing challenger. The lefty often caught Lopez with sharp southpaw straight lefts followed by quick rights. The fight was even when everything changed abruptly in the seventh. Lopez accelerated his attack and kept landing solid shots, while Koshimoto's footwork temporarily stopped. Lopez kept punching from all angles so effectively that Koshimoto eventually became groggy and helpless. One moment, he had been so elusive, the next he was defenseless. The referee declared a halt with 11 seconds remaining in the round, and some ringsiders felt it was a premature stoppage. The criticism immediately vanished as Koshimoto, 39-2-2 (17), fell down and stayed prone for minutes.

Lopez, 19-2 (13), jubilantly celebrated his upset victory as he was surrounded by his manager Jose Antonio Gomez and trainers Rudy Lopez and Jorge Barrera. The audience was shocked by the outcome and remained very silent through the walkout bouts that were fought afterward.

Promoters: **Fukuoka Promotions, Teiken Promotions**

(7-30-06)

Joe Koizumi

Juan Diaz KO 9 Randy Suico

Las Vegas, Nevada: Fighting on the Shane Mosley-Fernando Vargas II undercard at the MGM Grand Garden, Diaz showed fantastic skills and patience against Suico round after round, punishing him with big shots until the fight was finally stopped in round nine, giving Diaz his fourth successful defense of the WBA lightweight belt.

"Suico was pretty rough," Diaz said afterward. "He came to take my title and he was very strong. He came out punching from the opening bell."

Both fighters began the bout trading short punches at close range. Diaz, 135, Houston, Texas, started to work his accurate left hooks to Suico's body in the first and kept those hard shots going throughout the fight. Halfway through the first round, Suico, 135, Cebu, Philippines, slowed down instantly as Diaz, 22, landed his first major blows. A good straight right followed by a left hook to the head shook up the Filipino. From that point on, Diaz took full control over the 26-year-old challenger.

In the fourth round, Diaz landed a clean left hook and right hand to Suico's head and also added another left hook that rocked Suico's head backward.

He continued to land hooks to which there was no reply. Suico gave away his height advantage by standing close and getting caught.

After the fourth, the referee and doctor kept a close eye on Suico, continually coming to his corner between rounds to warn him that he was taking too many shots. Suico took heed of the warnings and came out in round five fighting a little better. But it was still Diaz' round. Even though Diaz is not a heavy puncher, he more than makes up for that shortcoming with his work rate and conditioning.

Suico may well have won the seventh round by landing accurate right and left uppercuts, as it looked like Diaz was taking the round off. But in the eighth, Diaz, 30-0 (15), continued to land rights and lefts at will to Suico's head and body, and referee Joe Cortez (USA) was staying close. Suico, 24-3 (21), was taking repeated shots to the head and wasn't returning anything of significance.

Diaz landed another solid left hook-right hand combination in the ninth that hurt Suico once again. He then followed up with a flurry of shots, forcing the referee to step in

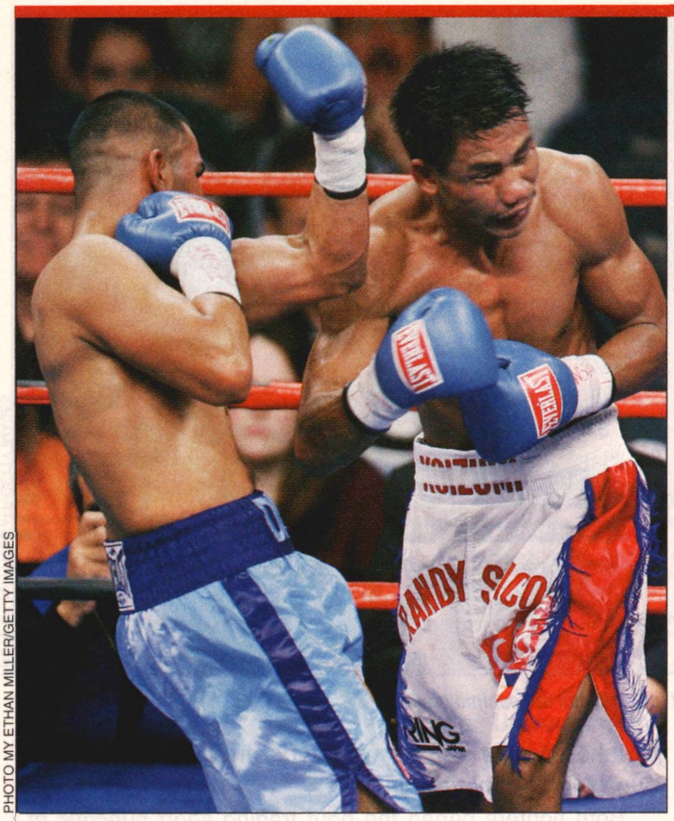

PHOTO MY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Diaz had too much firepower for brave Suico to handle

and stop the fight at 2:06 of the round.

Diaz, who won an alphabet belt at 20 years old, has been getting better with every fight. He said he hopes for a bout against Acelino Freitas or Diego Corrales in the near future.

Television: **HBO PPV**
Promoters: **Golden Boy Promotions, Main Events**
(7-15-06)
Wayne McCullough

Daniel Ponce De Leon KO 1 Sod Looknongyangtoy

Las Vegas, Nevada: This was expected to be a long, competitive battle because Ponce De Leon and Sod had faced each other last October with Ponce De Leon pulling out the close unanimous decision win over 12 rounds. The rematch, however, was anything but long and competitive.

The fans at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas saw Ponce De Leon catch Sod with a perfect shot in round number one to kayo his opponent and walk away with an extremely quick win. It marked the Mexican's second defense of the WBO super bantamweight title.

The powerpunching Ponce De Leon, 122, Cuauhtemoc, Mexico, came out displaying his usual stand-up-straight southpaw style as he moved flatfooted around the ring. Sod, 122, Petchaboon, Thailand, started the fight as though he was going to be the aggressor. Also a southpaw, Sod tried to force Ponce De Leon to fight. Even though he is not known to be a big puncher, Sod was fighting like one.

Sod, 29, was in close when suddenly Ponce De Leon, 25, threw a straight left hand that caught him perfectly on the chin, sending him face first onto the canvas. He was out cold before he hit the deck and referee Jay Nady (USA) stopped the fight immediately at 0:52 of the first round.

Ponce De Leon, 29-1 (27), has only gone the distance three times in his career. Against Sod, 27-2 (10), he demonstrated why he is considered, pound-for-pound, one of the biggest punchers in boxing today.

Television: **HBO PPV**
Promoters: **Golden Boy Promotions, Main Events**
(7-15-06)
Wayne McCullough

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Ponce De Leon rips into Sod en route to first-round kayo

Gary St. Clair W 12 Cassius Baloyi

Kempton Park, South Africa: Six years ago, St. Clair seemed on the fast track to trialhorse status. He had three losses and a draw in his first 21 fights and, at age 25, was headed nowhere fast. Now he's 31, he hasn't lost since the age of 25, and he's no trialhorse. After outlasting Baloyi over 12 rounds at the Emperors Palace Casino in Baloyi's homeland, St. Clair is now a titleholder.

The title he holds, the IBF junior lightweight belt, isn't worth much, considering it's been stripped from three outstanding fighters (Diego Corrales, Erik Morales, and Marco Antonio Barrera) already this decade. But, still, St. Clair beat a quality fighter to obtain the title, and it certainly qualifies as a career-best win.

Baloyi, who won the vacant belt by 11th-round stoppage against Manuel Medina in May, was making his first defense, and it started going badly right from the start when St. Clair, 129½, Sydney, Australia, via Georgetown, Guyana, crowded him in the first round and shook up the defending titlist up with lefts and rights to the body and head. But Baloyi, 129¼, Johannesburg, South Africa, battled back, scoring with some heavy shots of his own in the second. St. Clair remained aggressive and backed Baloyi up in the third, but even when the South African was moved to the ropes, he remained dangerous with counterpunches.

Through seven rounds, the fight remained virtually even, but stamina ultimately made all the difference. Baloyi, 31, began to breathe heavily from the eighth round on, whereas St. Clair continued to march forward and keep his fists churning. It didn't help Baloyi, 32-3 (17), that a cut opened over his left eye in the eighth and the blood continued to flow freely over the final few rounds. St. Clair really took charge down the stretch for what seemed like a clear-cut victory, although the judges scored it close. Howard Foster (USA) seemed about right with a 116-112 tally, while Charlie Lucas (Australia) had it 115-113 and Lulama Mtya (South Africa) saw it just 115-114. The referee was Ernie Sharif (USA).

With the mild upset title win, St. Clair moves to 38-3-2 (17) and extends his unbeaten streak to 22 fights.

Promoter: **Golden Gloves Promotions**

(7-29-06)

Zsolt Erdei W 12 Thomas Ulrich

Oberhausen, Germany: Given that Erdei, 172¼, Budapest, Hungary, is perhaps the leading light heavyweight in the world today (assuming Bernard Hopkins is indeed retired), it was no surprise that he handled the experienced Ulrich, 174¼, Berlin, Germany, with such ease. The German, after all, was once his sparring partner, and this turned out to be more of a glorified payday than a serious last stab at glory for Ulrich at the Konig-Pilsener Arena. Erdei successfully defended the WBO light heavyweight belt for the sixth time via wide unanimous decision.

A former Olympic bronze medalist, Ulrich was once considered one of his country's foremost talents, hailed even as a possible successor to long-reigning beltholder Henry Maske. But a sixth-round stoppage defeat to Tomasz Adamek in October 2005 for the WBC 175-pound title confirmed what Glen Johnson apparently established in 2001, that at the highest level Ulrich would always be found wanting.

Erdei, however, gave him plenty of respect, and the fight was waged at long range almost exclusively. The Hungarian's precision punching proved the difference as he unleashed a hard jab into the 31-year-old's face from the opening bell and embellished his handiwork with the left hand with almost surgical use of his right. Ulrich was game, but nowhere near as accurate, missing with the vast majority of his punches, but remaining resolute. His professional pride, at least, remained intact against his former boss.

The same could not be said of his face, which long before the finish was betraying clear evidence of Erdei's superiority. His left eye swelled up badly, and he also suffered a cut and damage to his nose. Round after round, Erdei, 25-0 (15), dictated with seemingly minimum effort and Ulrich fulfilled the role he had come to play.

It was only in the final round that there developed a small deviation from a predictable script. Ulrich, 29-3 (19), got through with a right hand to the jaw and, for a moment, Erdei was stunned. The German tried to follow up, but the moment of danger swiftly passed. Erdei closed out the round as he had most of the others, firmly in control and completely at ease. Jose Martinez (Spain) scored it 120-108, Roberto Ramirez (Puerto Rico) saw it 118-110, and John Stewart (USA) had it 116-112 for Erdei. THE RING saw it 118-110 for Erdei. The referee was Eddie Cotton (USA).

Promoter: **Universum-Box**

(7-29-06)

Brian Doogan ■

PHOTO BY CHRISTOF KOEPSEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Erdei snaps Ulrich's head back with a left

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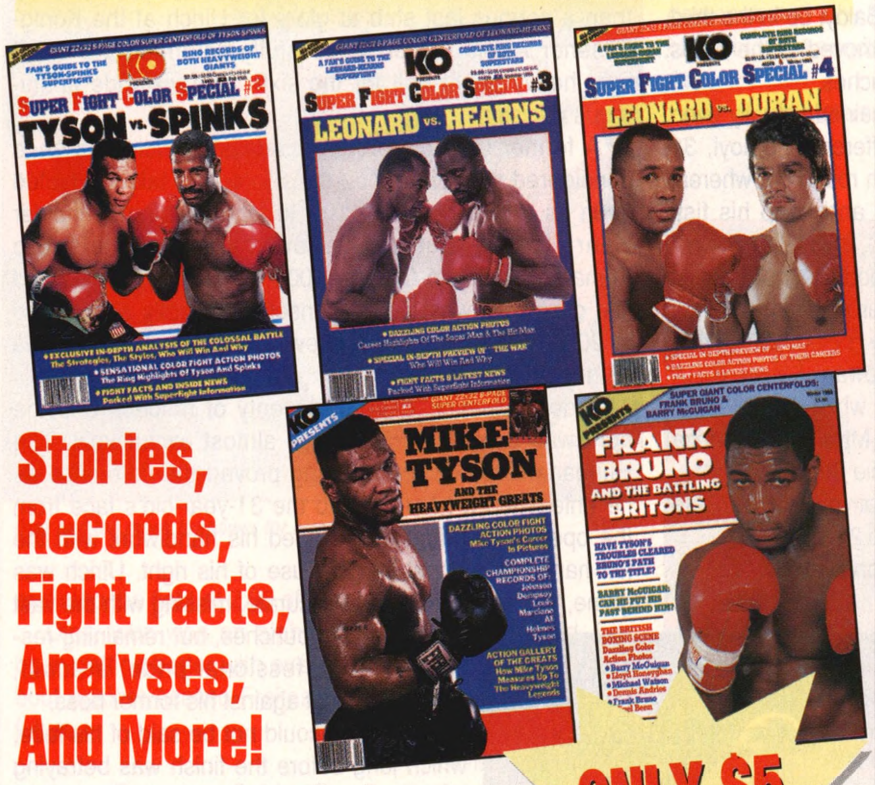

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New Faces

(Continued from Page 24)

in shape. Plus, he has a crowd-pleasing style; he's very aggressive and hits with both hands."

***

Several hours after his blitz of Nelson, Izquierdo sat before a large prime rib and potato at the upscale Friday's Station Steak and Seafood restaurant in Harrah's Tahoe. "This is what I usually have after a fight," Izquierdo said through interpreter Miguel Mendiola. "Tomorrow it's back to discipline again."

Izquierdo was flanked by his godfather, Alex Nevarez, and Zavalza. Farther down the table was Napoles, who had nothing to say about his own career but became very talkative when asked about Izquierdo.

"He reminds me of myself when I was an amateur in Cuba," said Napoles. "We had almost the same record. That's why I like him. I think he's a very tough guy—a strong puncher."

Zavalza, who had been watching the interview with a broad smile, chimed in: "He's very disciplined. That's one of the things that have helped his career, the discipline and natural talent he has."

According to Shaw, the reason Izquierdo never fought in the Olympics is quite simple: The Cuban government labeled him a flight risk.

"I had a lot of problems going to other places," said Izquierdo. "The Cuban government thought I'd go to another country and stay in the U.S."

The Cuban government was only partly right.

"I defected the first opportunity I got, in 2003, to the best country in the world ... Mexico," Izquierdo said to cheers around the dinner table.

Izquierdo married Celia Rodriguez, by whom he has an 18-month-old son, Alejandro Antonio Izquierdo. He also pays regular visits to the son he left behind in Cuba, Jose Antonio Izquierdo Jr.

"That he goes back to Cuba and takes care of a child over there by his

ex-wife, from a cultural level, that he never abandoned anyone in Cuba, that speaks on some level about him," said Shaw.

Call it irony, call it coincidence, call it what you will, but Izquierdo calls it providence that he found Napoles, of all people, when he made his exodus to Mexico.

tough to argue with the result. It's simply too early to know if he will ever fulfill the potential Shaw and Quintana see in him.

"There's a hole in boxing right now," Quintana said. "There are pretty good boxers now, but soon they will be leaving. Izquierdo will come in and fill those holes."

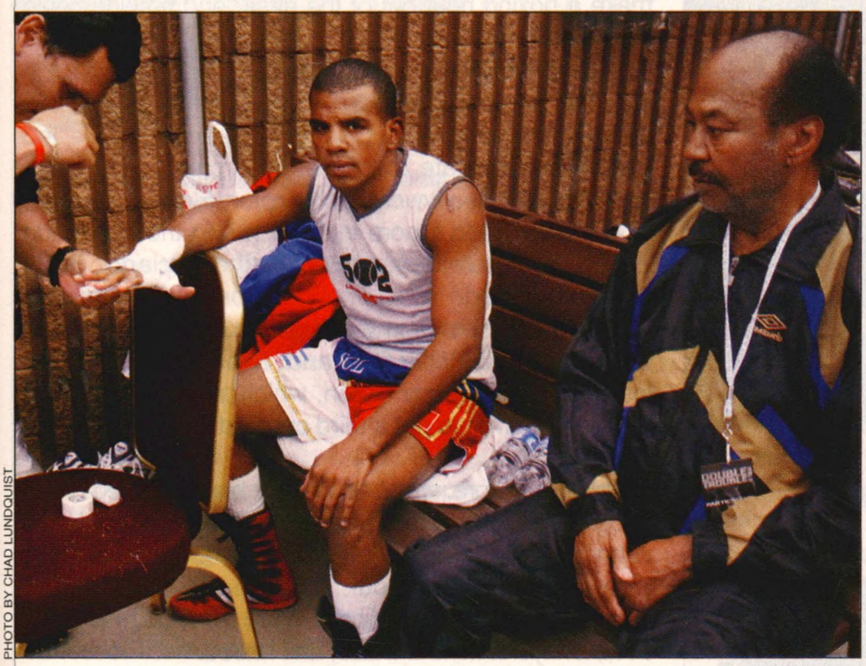


PHOTO BY CHAD LUNDQUIST

Izquierdo gets his hands wrapped prior to his rapid-fire blowout of Nelson. That's Hall of Famer Jose Napoles on the left, who is one of Izquierdo's advisors. They are both Cuban expatriates who moved to Mexico to box professionally.

"I was 10 when I started boxing, and from the time I was a little kid, I admired the great champion Jose Napoles," he said. "Before I was fighting, I admired the legends like Napoles and Ultiminio 'Sugar' Ramos. Then came the opportunity of finding him in Mexico and being together. That's why he comes with me to all my fights.

"He's my adviser. I learn techniques from him—the combinations, how to slip and move. When I was a fighter in Cuba, I was slugging. I learn how to box from him."

Izquierdo has displayed power early in his career, amassing seven first-round knockouts and three more in the second round. He has been the distance once, a 10-round victory over Juan Jose Mendez.

If anything, Izquierdo looked overly aggressive against Nelson, but it's

Shaw said the 135- and 140-pound divisions are where Izquierdo will make his mark.

"It's the right time for these divisions," said the promoter. "He might have a career-defining fight next year. Acelino Freitas has peaked. Izquierdo can catch him coming down from his peak. Jesus Chavez, Jorge Barrios, if he comes to 135, there are a lot of high-profile fights for him once we get him some experience.

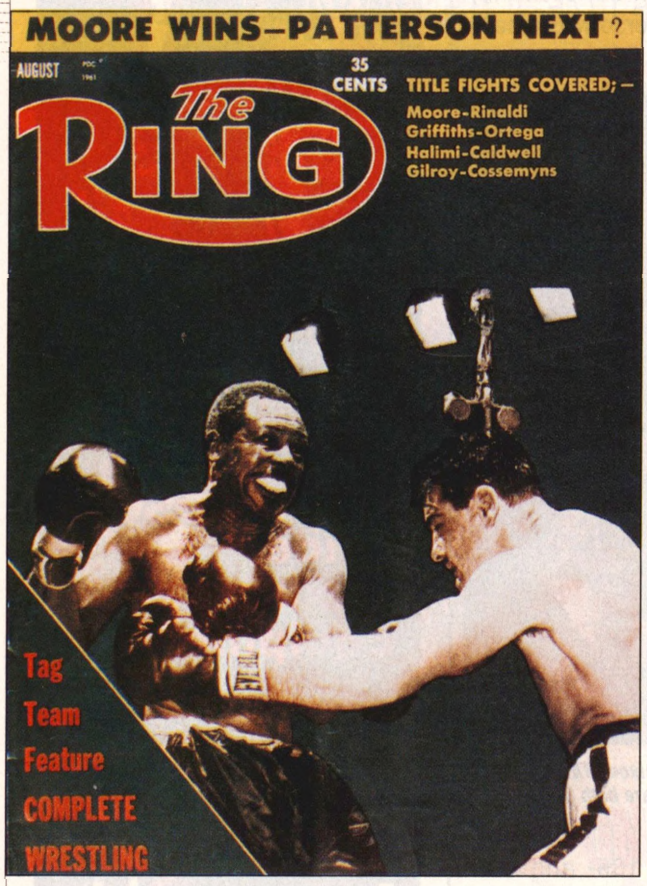
There are a lot of question marks surrounding Izquierdo—his true age, his true record, his true talent level—and it's how he eventually answer these questions that will determine whether or not he can come even close to being another Napoles. ■

Mike Houser covers boxing for the Nevada Appeal and is an occasional contributor to this magazine.

The Ring Flashback

Through the years with "The Bible of Boxing"

August 1961



COVER STORY: "Moore Wins—Patterson Next?" by Managing Editor Nat Loubet, who covered light heavyweight champion Moore's 15-round unanimous decision over challenger Giulio Rinaldi at Madison Square Garden.

"Moore won, and by a fairly convincing margin, but he fought mainly from memory—and a guy can forget a lot of things when he's been around as long as Archie," wrote Loubet. "The Italian was overly cautious, tried to make a boxing bout out of the affair, and nothing could have suited Archie better."

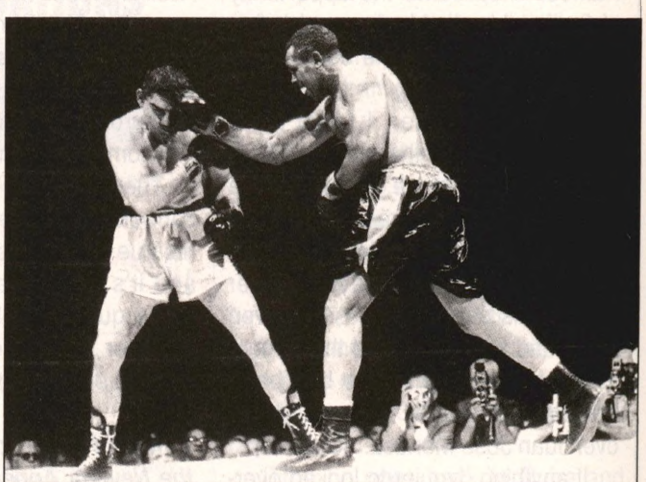
The crowd of approximately 9,500 created the biggest gate at the Garden in several years and proved that Moore was still an attraction. This led Loubet to speculate that "Ancient Archie" might get a rematch with heavyweight champion Floyd Patterson, who had stopped Moore in 1956 to win the title made vacant by the retirement of Rocky Marciano. But it never happened.

Moore won his next three, all at heavyweight, and then drew with Willie Pastrano. But in '62, Patterson lost the title to Sonny Liston, which pretty much killed Moore's attempt to get a third crack at the heavyweight crown.

Instead, Moore, who had already been stripped of the 175-pound by then for failing to defend against Harold Johnson again, took a bout with young Cassius Clay, who stopped him in four. It proved to be "The Old Mongoose's" final significant fight. He had one more bout, a kayo of Mike DiBiase, and retired.

"Griffith Rules The Roost" is West Coast correspondent Bill Miller's account of welterweight champion Emile Griffith's 12th-round TKO of veteran contender Gaspar Ortega at the Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles.

"Emile Griffith, the militant milliner from the Virgin Islands, accustomed to trimming lace on ladies' headgear, did a neat job of trimming and lacing Gaspar

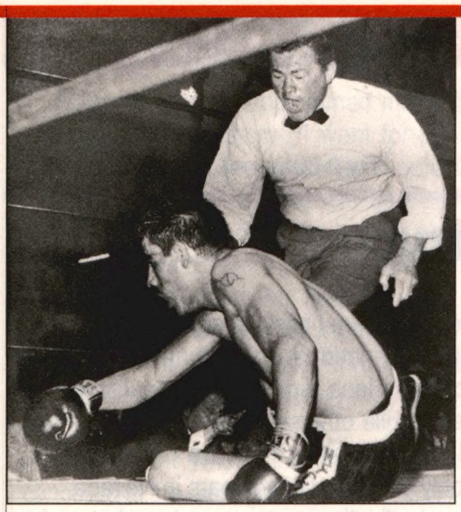


Moore slams a right hand into Rinaldi's face

World Champions

(for the period ended June 22, 1961)

Heavyweight: Floyd Patterson
Light Heavyweight: Archie Moore
Middleweight: Paul Pender
Welterweight: Emile Griffith
Lightweight: Joe Brown
Featherweight: Davey Moore
Bantamweight: Eder Jofre
Flyweight: Pone Kingpetch



Referee Tommy Hart counts over Ortega during a failed bid to beat Griffith

Ortega," wrote Miller.

This was Griffith's first defense of his first reign as 147-pound champion and prior to his tragic third fight with Benny Paret. At this point in his career, Griffith was still gunning hard for knockouts, a facet of his game that disappeared following the Paret catastrophe. In fact, his domination of Ortega was so overwhelming, according to Miller, there were shouts of "Stop it! Stop it!" from the crowd before referee Tommy Hart rescued Ortega.

"Boxing's Most Potent Weapon" by Lew Eskin was supposed to be an in-depth look at the left hook, which, according to Eskin, "has accounted for more prominent one-round knockouts than any other blow."

Unfortunately, although Eskin strung together a series of memorable left hooks and left-hookers, he never got down to explaining why the left hook is such a deadly punch, as compared to, say, the right cross or the uppercut.

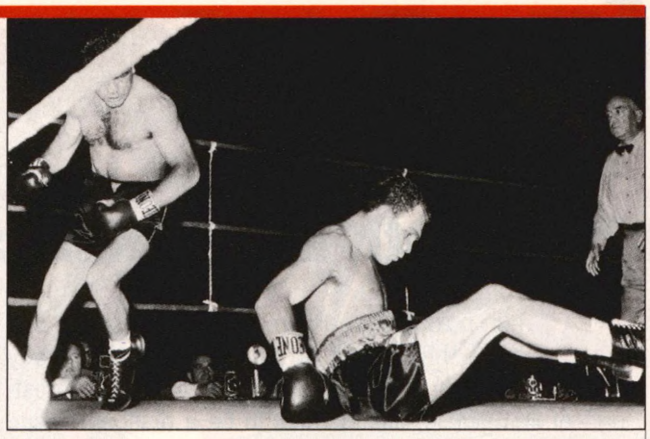
"European Gossip" by Charlie Paris featured the rubber match between Duilio Loi and Carlos Ortiz for the junior welterweight title, which attracted a gigantic crowd of 60,000 fans to the San Siro Stadium in Milan.

Ortiz had won the first bout, and Loi the second; both were close. But the Italian dominated the third match, decking Ortiz twice in the sixth round and holding off a late charge from the Puerto Rican to win a unanimous 15-round decision,

"Bob Cleroux: Latest Heavyweight Sensation" by Fred Eisenstadt hyped the Montreal slugger who had already won and lost the Canadian heavyweight title in a pair of bouts with George Chuvalo.

"A truly savage ringman, the French-Canadian is a heavyweight who supplies thrilling action," wrote Eisenstadt. "Not the type of pug to take a backward step, Cleroux keeps moving forward, providing fistic fireworks every moment he's in the ring."

Cleroux regained the Canadian title in August '61 by winning his rubber match with Chuvalo, but subsequent losses to Zora Folley (twice) and Mike DeJohn knocked



Ortiz hits the floor in the sixth round of his rubber match with Loi

him out of contention, and Cleroux retired in '69 with an overall record of 48-6-1 (38).

"Texas Boxing News" by Harlan Haas highlighted Cleveland Williams' fifth-round kayo of Alex Miteff in Houston. "There were 6,000 screaming fans and I'd venture to say that a great majority of them would tell you that on this particular night Cleve 'Big Cat' Williams could have tipped over any heavyweight in the world," raved Haas.

"From The Philippines" by local correspondent Felipe J.C. Galand reported on the bout between homegrown hero Flash Elorde and Italian Giordano Campari that drew approximately 36,000 fans to the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City—for a non-title bout!

Both men suffered cuts before Elorde prevailed via 10-round decision amid accusations of headbutting from the loser.

"In And Around Philadelphia" focused on future middleweight champion Joey Giardello's ninth-round kayo of Wilfie Greaves. It was Giardello's first fight in Philly in five years and attracted an SRO crowd of 1,630 and set a new Alhambra gate record. But while Giardello-Greaves was the main event, most of the crowd showed up to see world shot put champion Bill Nieder make his professional boxing debut. It turned out to be a disaster for Los Angeles native Nieder, who was knocked out by Philadelphian Jim Wiley in the first round. ■

Elorde as he looked in his prime

By Margaret Goodman, M.D.

The Truth About Medical Testing

When boxing experts are asked what is the one thing they would do to improve safety, they chime in unison: "Standardize the medical testing." At first glance, this appears to be a reasonable and simple feat. Nevertheless, year after year things rarely change. But if every commission required the same list of examinations, would this be the ultimate solution?

Many jurisdictions in the United States require little more than a yearly physical exam, while others require MRI scans, EKGs, chest X-rays, extensive blood work, as well as eye and neurological exams. But many jurisdictions have not changed. Why?

The answer is not simple. Some state regulations allow commissions to order whatever tests they deem necessary. Other states could expand testing, but fear that an increase in requirements will drive cards elsewhere.

I can tell you firsthand that medical regulation changes are frequently fought. Women's organizations and the ACLU recently challenged the Missouri Office of Athletics over pregnancy testing, citing that women had the right to place themselves and their unborn fetus at risk in the ring. The California State Athletic Commission faced the same opposition. If this isn't absurd enough, several argued it was unfair to single out women to be the only ones to undergo pregnancy tests. Am I missing something here?

Beyond specific regulations, the timing of testing is debated. Some commissions require HIV/Hepatitis testing every calendar year, while others require the studies every six months. MRI scans in New York are required every three years, and only once every five years in Nevada.

This lack of standardization goes on and on, but, unfortunately, the cold, hard truth is that many jurisdictions don't advance medical testing because it is not mandated.

While commissions do care about the health and welfare of the fighters, once you start adding testing, you have to be prepared to follow up on the results. This takes manpower, which many commission offices lack. And once the results are obtained, the commission has to be prepared to interpret and act upon them. Not all abnormal medical results preclude a fighter from fighting in certain jurisdictions. Some states allow a fighter fully treated for Hepatitis B to compete, while others place that individual on indefinite suspension. An abnormal MRI in New York might contain an allowable condition in Arizona.

This continued inconsistency leads to jurisdiction shopping by many promoters who are fully aware which commissions are stricter regarding medical clearance. If a fighter's camp knows their man has a tear in his retina that might require surgery, it is not unheard of to see that boxer fight in a state that has no eye exam requirement. Furthermore, some promoters are educated as to how to argue their case in obtaining clearance. Great pressure is all too often placed on commissions and their physicians to okay a fighter they might otherwise not wish to clear. Some states with limited resources fear lengthy litigation if they turn down a fighter for medical reasons. On the other hand, Tennessee successfully fought in court to not license Riddick Bowe, while he was allowed to fight in Oklahoma and California.

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

California allowed Bowe (left) to fight in 2005, while Tennessee went to court to stop him

Are The Tests Legit?

A fighter recently approached me and with the following story: "I went for pre-fight testing to three separate medical offices, and no one asked to see any identification. How did they know I was who I said I was?"

I wasn't shocked that this occurred. The United States has so many privacy laws regarding medical testing that should have made this occurrence a virtual impossibility.

Two recent Telefutura matches were cancelled at the Mohegan Sun after fraudulent MRI results were submitted for the July 21, 2006, Top Rank card. It was not the first time the Mohegan Sun's chief physician received the same exact EKG on several fighters.

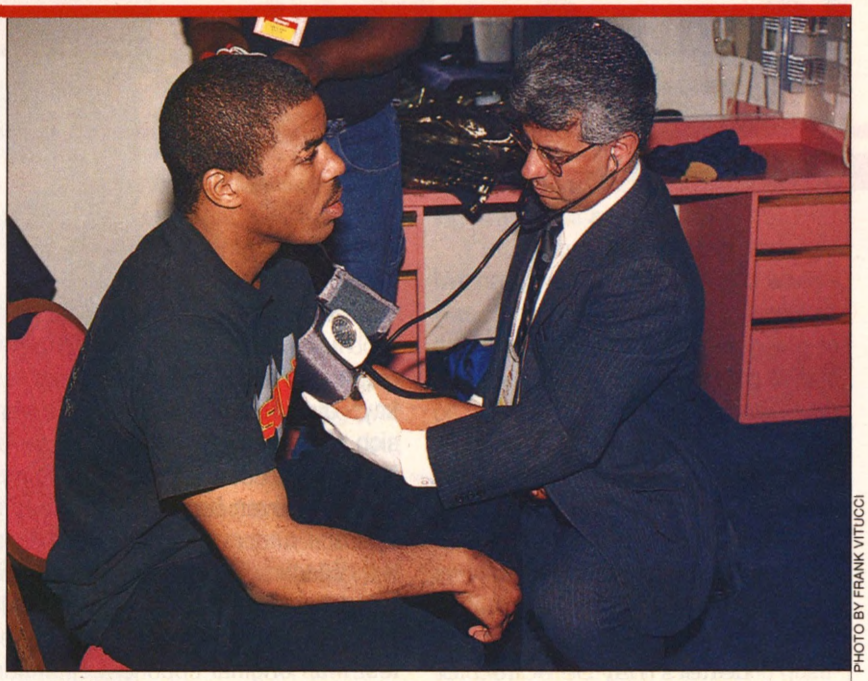


PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Different states have different medical standards and exams

In Nevada, medical tests are rarely verified, if at all. The commission can question them, but for the most part rely on the honor system. Test results are infrequently faxed to the commission directly from the medical facility where they were completed. A competitor may have test results from as many as three facilities. If you multiply that by six to 10 cards per month, 16 boxers per card, five tests per fighter, tracking the validity of each exam is a tough assignment for office personnel. In 2005, a foreign fighter died after his fight in Nevada. His medical forms were never signed by him and came with no proof of identification. They should have been verified.

The seriousness of this cannot be underestimated. The frequency is unknown. Imagine facing an opponent who never had his testing completed for a communicable disease such as AIDS or hepatitis? This laxity places not only the fighters, but also all boxing personnel at risk, including officials, cameramen, and commentators who are frequently splattered with small droplets of blood.

Immediate Solutions

•Each commission should adopt the minimum recommended medical requirements as outlined by the Association of Boxing Commissions. While this is not enough, and several jurisdictions go beyond this list, it is a start. If a state's regulations need to change to accomplish this goal, change them! No excuse is acceptable.

•Medical testing must be done at approved facilities. This is not to denigrate any institution or clinic, but the commission must be able to prove the medical facility's existence and qualifications.

•Medical tests must be routinely validated by the commission. If fraudulent tests are submitted, a complete investigation of *everyone* involved must be conducted.

•All medical forms must be signed by the fighter. If the forms were never signed, it is impossible to prove the results belonged to that athlete.

•Medical tests must be submitted *directly* from the clinic or institution with *proof of identification* of the fighter. It isn't enough to simply check the boxer's federal ID at the weigh-in.

Future Solutions

Funding is an eternal problem. Who doesn't understand the difficulties involved in making a four-round fighter pay for an MRI scan? But whether funding comes from the promoter, the state, the fighter, or ticket sales, this is an inherently dangerous sport where medical fitness is of paramount importance. Boxing can no longer pontificate the solutions; lives are at stake.

Confidentiality limits access to medical records. Years ago, Dr. Flip Homansky proposed a national databank that would make all medical tests done on fighters available to each and every commission. Privacy rights need to be protected, but this form of shared information will protect fighters as they travel between jurisdictions.

Most jurisdictions fear federal regulation. While I believe it to be the only solution at this point, the best way for boxing to escape such a fate is for boxing to fix itself on all levels. It is the responsibility of every commission to do this for the protection of the athletes. Anything less is unacceptable.

Last, but perhaps most important, boxers must be empowered to treat the sport as a business. New promoters like Golden Boy, owned by Oscar De La Hoya, who also made Bernard Hopkins, Shane Mosley, Marco Antonio Barrera, and Winky Wright part of the corporate entity, are providing a great example to other fighters to take responsibility for their careers and health. ■

Dr. Goodman will be happy to answer questions about all medical aspects of boxing in future columns. Please send inquiries to: The Fight Doctor, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19304

[Come Out Writing]

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Maskaev-Rahman Reaction

Congratulations to Oleg Maskaev for his fabulous win over Hasim Rahman. Not only did he repeat his kayo over "The Rock" to claim a version of the heavyweight championship, he also silenced the critics. And things could get even better for Maskaev if reported rumors of a November fight with Wladimir Klitschko prove to have any substance. I think Oleg would certainly give Wladimir a much tougher test than original opponent Shannon Briggs would have done.

While I feel nothing but admiration toward Maskaev, I do, however, have a lot of sympathy for the deposed Rahman. He will get no end of the stick from the critics now. I can't see any way back for Hasim. Certainly, a third match with his two-time conqueror looks highly unlikely. Rahman's career at top level may very well be over. On the other hand, Maskaev's is looking brighter than it ever has!

JAMES SLATER
York, England

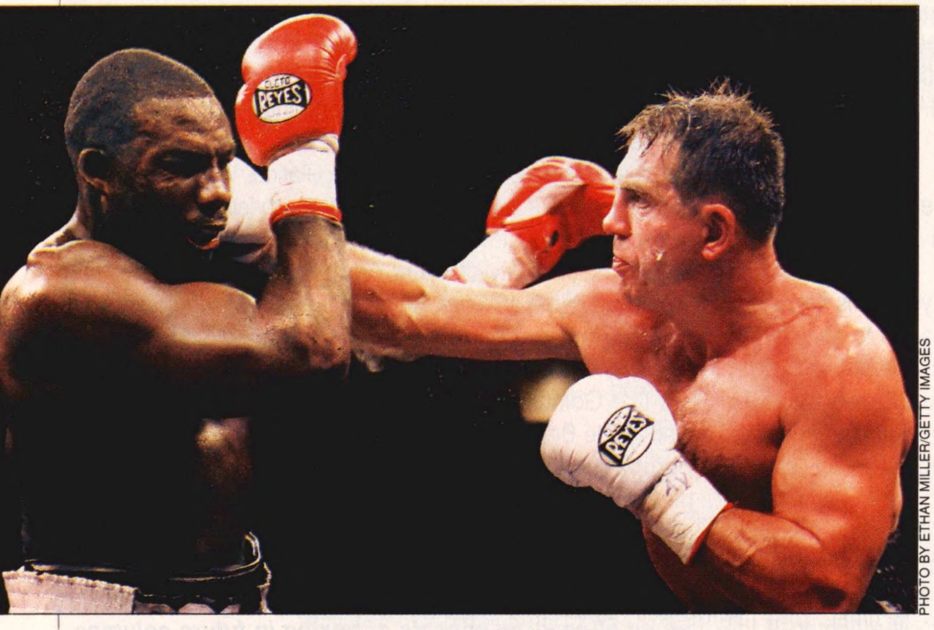


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Oleg Maskaev delivers a right hand to the head of Hasim Rahman en route to a stunning upset victory and the WBC heavyweight belt. Reader James Slater writes to praise Maskaev and to lobby for a Maskaev-Wladimir Klitschko showdown next.

Conflicting Viewpoints

I just watched the Vernon Forrest-Ike Quartey fight and was completely shocked at how the judges scored the fight. They made about as much sense as day-before-the-fight weigh-ins. What fight were they watching? Ike dominated Vernon from start to finish, looking very impressive in the process. I've seen some bad decisions in my life, but this was ridiculous.

JOHN ARMSTRONG
Troy, NY

The HBO commentators distorted the Vernon Forrest-Ike Quartey fight. It wasn't an "outrageous" decision. I thought Forrest won by a point in a *very* close fight. Forrest threw more punches and slightly outboxed Quartey, who was the aggressor. It was a very close fight, but no reason for Larry and the boys to get upset. The "outrage" was completely orchestrated.

FRANK GANNON
Demorest, GA

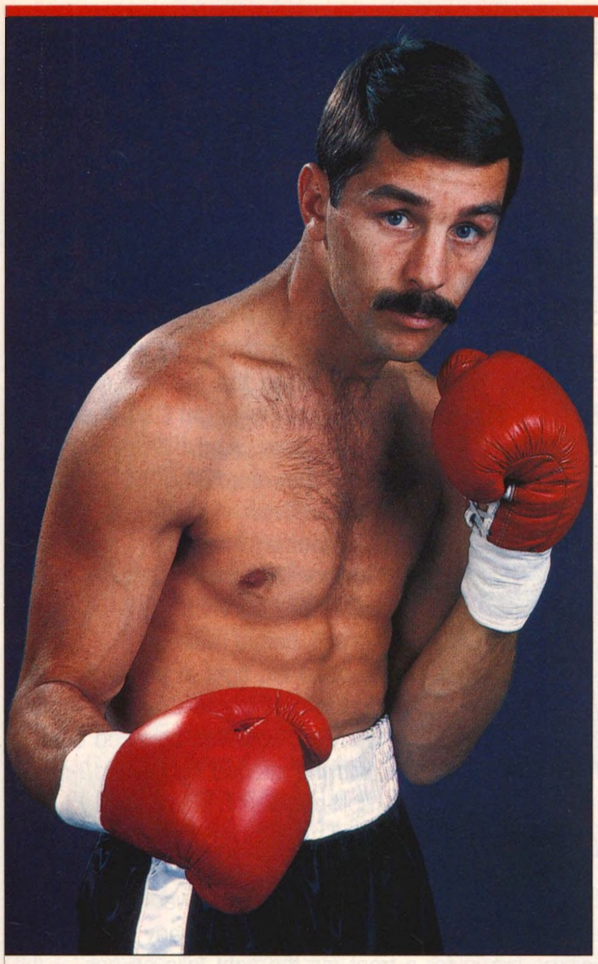
Working-Class Hero

I really hope the Jose Antonio Rivera-Antonio Margarito fight happens. Margarito showed zero class when questioning why Rivera has a title and still has a full-time job. I wonder if Margarito actually realizes that not every titleholder makes millions each fight. Rivera has a family to support and hopefully he can help to further that cause by beating Margarito.

DAN MUELLER
Ferrismueller1@hotmail.com

Praying For Pac-Man

As a countryman of Manny Pacquiao, I'm really concerned with all the things he is doing after the Oscar Larios fight. Pacquiao reportedly lost a lot of bucks betting on cockfights and that he also spent the whole night in a casino. And now we hear he is preparing for a rock concert in Manila.



South African Brian Mitchell won both the WBA and IBF 130-pound titles in a globetrotting career that saw him lose just once in 49 pro bouts. Reader Brad Morris writes to urge Mitchell's overdue election to the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

I hope and pray all of this won't take its toll in the Morales rubber match. Please, Manny, stay away from the bunch of nobodies surrounding you.

SHERWIN SANTIAGO
sherwin_santiago28@yahoo.com

Baldomir Booster

Congratulations to Carlos Baldomir for his second consecutive high-profile victory. He broke down the favored Arturo Gatti round by round. I'd love to see the world welterweight champion's second defense be against Ricky Hatton, Antonio Margarito, or Miguel Cotto. I think a defense against "Pretty Boy" Floyd Mayweather would be a real bore.

RICHEY S. JONES
richeysj@cox.net

Rants About Ryan

In the October 2006 issue, Jeff Ryan comments that "if only all of the fighters of today had Patterson's guts," and then proceeds to use Arturo Gatti's "surrender" to Mayweather as evidence of his claim that today's fighters lack the intestinal fortitude of fighters from Patterson's era. I don't know which Gatti Ryan has been watching over the last decade, but Gatti embodies the idea of blood and guts, and for Ryan to belittle Gatti in the guts category in any shape or form to make a point is a joke.

RON CHADHA
Chicago, IL

I have to disagree with Jeff Ryan when he states that Buddy McGirt will never make the International Boxing Hall of Fame on his boxing accomplishments. McGirt was a two-division titleholder (junior welter and welter) and only lost his titles when facing a very good Meldrick Taylor and a great Pernell Whitaker. If Barry McGuigan, Jose Torres, and Pipino Cuevas made the IBHOF, then why not McGirt?

KYLE PROVENZANO
Albany, NY

Is Mitchell Hall Worthy?

Here's my pitch to have former WBA and IBF junior lightweight titleholder Brian Mitchell nominated to the International Boxing Hall of Fame:

When the WBA stopped ranking South African fighters in the mid-1980s because of the government's apartheid system, Mitchell became their worst nightmare: a dominant champion who would go on to defend a division-record 12 times. Because he was not allowed to defend at home, Mitchell always defended in the other guy's backyard. The WBA was initially going to strip him, but the worldwide boxing community kicked up hell. He was eventually stripped when he opted to fight Tony Lopez for the IBF title, easily outpointing him in their second fight.

I am South African and watched Mitchell come up in the 1980s when I was living there, and I told everyone the same thing: "This guy's going to win a world title, and he's going to hold on to it too."

Mitchell is the only fighter I have ever seen whose work rate increased as the fight wore on. I would love to have seen Brian fight Barry McGuigan and Azumah Nelson. I think he would have outworked them both. Mitchell eventually retired with an outstanding record of 45-1-3 (21). There's no question that Mitchell's the best fighter South Africa ever produced.

BRAD MORRIS
Astoria, NY

Renewed Interest

First of all, I would like to express my appreciation and thankfulness for making me interested in the boxing game again. It happened about two years ago when I heard about your reinstatement of THE RING world championship belt. I have always been an old-fashioned buff, but by the late-1990s, I grew more and more impatient with the state of boxing and the degenerating trend of multiple champions. I just couldn't keep track of the champions, which led to an overall lack of interest in the sport.

This changed with your new policy. Nowadays, I just have to look at THE RING ratings and easily keep track of what is happening (however, the Swedish TV-commentators haven't discovered this yet). By knowing whom the real boss is, the average fans might get more interest in following their favorite fighter's movements in the rankings and therefore they'll become more attracted to the sport. And that, I think, is the whole meaning of being a fight fan. Thanks for your integrity and good coverage of the sport.

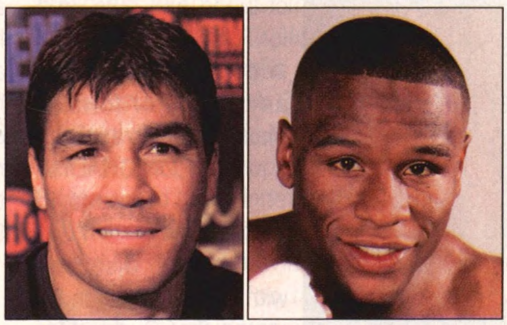
ANDERS GORANSSON
Karlskrona, Sweden ■

[Looking Ahead]

By Joe Santoliquito

Mayweather To Challenge Baldomir For Welterweight Title

Floyd Mayweather was getting tired of hearing about how he was supposedly ducking this or that opponent. So when he signed with **Dan Goossen** to promote his next fight, THE RING's pound-for-pound leader had a simple directive: Get him the best fight out there at 147 pounds. Goossen didn't have to look hard—just to the top of the welterweight division, where **Carlos Baldomir** resides as the world champion.



Baldomir-Mayweather showdown scheduled for November

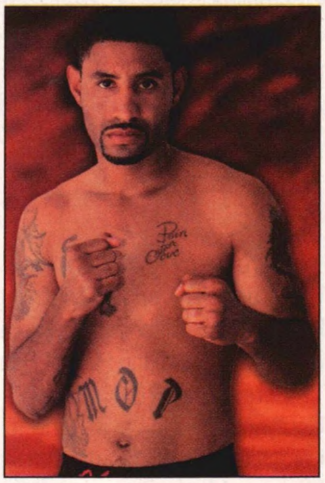
On November 4, on HBO Pay-Per-View, Baldomir will take on a very credible opponent for the third straight time—and easily the toughest—when he meets "Pretty Boy" at Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino, in Las Vegas.

"This is a very risky fight for Floyd, but one of the things Floyd insisted on is that he wanted the biggest and best fight out there. That's Baldomir," Goossen said. "You look at his record and see he has nine losses, but he hasn't lost in nine years, and that's a long period of time. The key here is taking on a man based on what he's done recently. Floyd is dealing with a dangerous, big, strong, and determined champion in Baldomir.

"There's only one other fight that would have been better in my eyes for Floyd, and that's against **Oscar De La Hoya**. Anyone who ridicules Floyd Mayweather from here on out, and what he's done against some of the names on his resume, doesn't know what they're talking about. Floyd's overcome a long line of tough, tough challenges. But because of the way Floyd handles these guys, fans want to see someone who has a shot at beating Floyd Mayweather."

That someone could be Baldomir, who upset **Zab Judah** in January to become welterweight champion, and then demolished **Arturo Gatti** in July. A win over Mayweather would make Baldomir a near-lock for Fighter of the Year.

"This is a fight that catapults Floyd to a new level of greatness," Goossen said. "This is a fight that's more than anyone can ask for. Baldomir's people understood the opportunity we presented. Now they think that they have the biggest prize of all in Floyd Mayweather. But I know Floyd doesn't believe that there is anyone who can beat him. It's a great fight for the fans. Their styles mesh perfectly. It's what everyone wants."



Corrales to fight rubber match with Casamayor

Listen Up:

Lightweight champion **Diego Corrales** will engage in a trilogy after all—only it won't be against **Jose Luis Castillo**. Instead, Corrales, whose third fight with Castillo, in February, was cancelled when the Mexican failed to make the 135-pound weight limit, will fight Cuban expatriate **Joel Casamayor** a third time. And if their first two bouts were any indication, the third should be highly competitive.

Casamayor won the first fight, in October '03, knocking down Corrales twice and surviving a knockdown himself, before referee **Tony Weeks** stopped the fight in the sixth round due to cuts inside Corrales' mouth. Corrales, however, bounced back to win the second fight, via 12-round split-decision in March '04.

The rubber match is set for October 7 on Showtime at a site that had not yet determined when this issue went to press. But regardless of the venue, fans who don't already subscribe to Showtime are in for a treat, as the fight falls on one of the cable network's free preview weekends.

Corrales-Casamayor III will face competition, as **Nicolay Valuev** will defend the WBA heavyweight belt against **Monte Barrett** the same day on HBO at the Allstate Arena in Rosemont, Illinois. It will be the 7', 320-pound Russian's first appearance in the United States since 2001, when he stopped **George Linberger** on a small club show in Atlantic City.

Adding spice to the card is the semifinal bout between undefeated **Tomasz Adamek**, the WBC light heavyweight titlist, in a rematch against **Paul Briggs**. The last time these two met, Adamek scored a 12-round majority decision in a bloody affair in Chicago, on May 21, 2005. Briggs has fought twice since that setback, while Adamek has had one title defense ... Another important fight comes a week later, in Copenhagen, Denmark, when **Mikkel Kessler** faces **Markus Beyer** in a super middleweight unification bout. Kessler, the undefeated WBA titlist, will be making his third title defense, while Beyer, the WBC belthold-er, will be making his sixth defense. The winner will be in an excellent position to challenge world 168-pound champion **Joe Calzaghe**. ■

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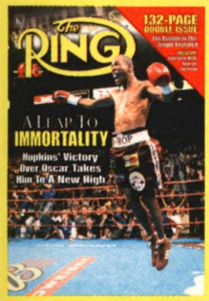

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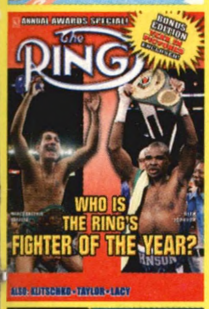

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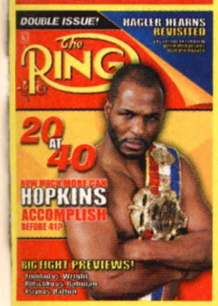

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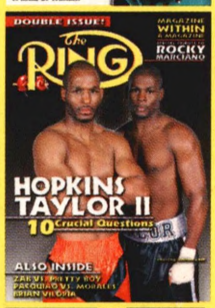

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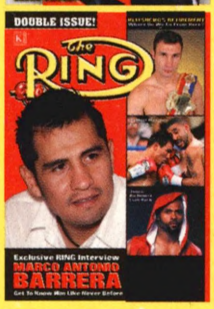

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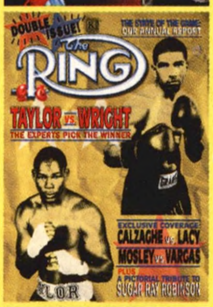

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